

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

PROSECUTION AGAINST THE EDITOR "IMPORTANT ISSUE INVOLVED IN "REASON" CASE."

Charge Framed Against Dr. D'Avoine.

Crown Prosecutor says it will be easy to prove Case against Editor of "Reason."—*"Sentinel."*

On the 6th of December, Inspector Lyons and another officer of the C. I. D. visited the Kamat Printing Press and seized copies of "Reason" and some proofs. Later they went to the Secretary's office and "requested" for all the available copies of the September issue of "Reason" which were given to them.

They made inquiries about the membership, about the no. of copies of "Reason" printed and circulated and the funds of the Association. All their inquiries were met. The Editor had just that afternoon left Bombay for a short holiday, but he got the news as he was boarding the train. A few days after his return, he was arrested on a warrant as a case was filed against him under Section 295-A, I. P. C. The section reads as follows :—

Sec. 295-A, I. P. C.

Whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of His Majesty's subjects, by words either spoken or written, or by visible representation, insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious feelings of that class shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years or fine or with both.

The charge is based on certain passages on Page 3 and 7 in the September issue of "Reason."

Dr. D'Avoine was bailed out, and the case was posted by the Chief Magistrate for the 18th. On the 18th "A charge of having deliberately and with malicious intent outraged the religious feelings of the Catholics and Muslims by insulting their religion or religious belief by the publication of an article under the caption "Religion and Morality" in the issue of "Reason" of September 1933, was framed against Dr. Charles Lionel D'Avoine, by the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay, on Thursday.

Dr. C. L. D'Avoine pleaded not guilty to the charge and further hearing of the case was adjourned to January 31.

Organ of Rationalism

Mr. Eastley, appearing for the prosecution said that the accused was the Editor and Publisher of "Reason" which was the official organ of the Rationalist Association. The membership of the Association which was daily increasing, was at present 262. The Association was started in 1930 as the Anti-Priestcraft Association and in 1931 the name was changed to the present one.

Among the objects of the Association, counsel said, one of them was "to combat all religious beliefs that did not stand the test of reason" and the magazine was the means through which propaganda was carried on. The monthly circulation of the magazine was 500 copies. These were printed at the Kamat Printing Press. An order for Government under Section 196 of the Civil Procedure Code, sanctioning the prosecution of the accused had been obtained, as the passages read out, by Counsel, were a direct hit at Christianity and Islam and tended to outrage the religious feelings or beliefs of the Catholics and Muslims.

Magistrate's Comment

The Magistrate referring to the second article remarked: "It says about Muslims but nothing about Islam." He added he could not see how a Muslim could get offended. The same might be said about the Parsis also.

Mr. Eastley said any Muslims reading the article would take a very strong exception to the statement that he was more particular about washing his fingers and toes and assuming the correct posture than committing an offence. It was a writing which would outrage the Muslim's feelings.

The prosecution had to prove, that the feelings of the Catholics and the Muslims had been offended by the publication of this article and counsel stated that this was an easy matter.

Inspector's Evidence

Inspector Lyons, C.I.D., then stepped into the witness-box and deposed to the facts of the case. He said that on December 5 last, he received the order from the Bombay Government sanctioning the prosecution of the accused. He went to the Kamat Printing Press and attached the copies of "Reason" that had been printed by the Press and took charge of the several manuscripts of articles that were to be published.

He then went to the office of the Rationalist Association at Empire Building and saw Dr. Coelho, the Secretary of the Association. Witness was shown the register of membership which showed that the number of members on the roll was 262. He gathered that 500 copies of the "Reason" had been published in November 1933 and every one of those copies had been circulated.

Witness was a Catholic but not a Roman Catholic. Questioned about the

articles witness said, he objected to the two articles. As a Catholic reading the articles he would consider that his religious feelings were outraged.

Warned in 1932

Witness said that the accused had been warned by the Commissioner of Police in August 1932 to refrain from publishing articles which tended to outrage the religious feelings of the communities.

Cross-examination of the witness was reserved.

Mr. S. S. Kamat, proprietor of the Kamat Printing Press, said that he was the printer of the magazine "Reason." He printed about 500 copies. The press had been working for about one and half years.

The Magistrate then framed a charge under Section 295-A I.P.C. against the accused, to which the accused pleaded not guilty.

Further hearing was then adjourned.

Mr. Eastley of Messrs. Little and Co. appeared for the Crown. Mr. F. S. Talyerkhan, Bar-at-Law, with Mr. C. N. Kanuga defended Dr. C. L. D'Avoine.

(—Sentinel.)

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS.

The Mahomedans are observing this month as a season of fasting; with the next new moon it will be over and the Id—Fitir festival will be celebrated. During the whole month of Ramzan the more orthodox Mahomedans will not eat, drink nor even smoke from sunrise till sunset. During the night, however, he can eat and drink as he likes. This

sudden reversal of the daily habits must be very harmful to the digestive system. Those who defend this religious practice assure us that it is not; on the contrary, they claim that they not only derive great spiritual benefit from it, but their health also benefits by it. Here, in India, the fast is not strictly observed. In Arabia and also in Persia they are still

very particular on the question. An Arab who may be found breaking the rule publicly may be seriously dealt with. It is evident that in those countries one is still not allowed to believe as one likes; one must conform to the herd. This reminds one that the Inquisitors of Spain also did not allow liberty of thought and freedom of conscience. One had to believe as the priests ordered. The penalty for disobeying that priestly tyranny was torture, imprisonment, confiscation of properties and very often death. The great victims of that awful tyranny were the Jews.

* * *

The idea of fasting as a meritorious act, which is believed to be very pleasing to the Deity, is a purely Oriental one. It is clear that the Mahomedans and the Christians derived it from the Jews who in turn learnt it from the Egyptians and Babylonians. The Hindus are firm believers in it, and they make it a *sine qua non* condition for the proper celebration of most of the Id festivals. The Christians were very strict about it two or three hundred years ago. The Lenten Season, which lasts about forty days, must have been for people who lived in those days, a very trying time. No meat was allowed but fish was permitted. Noseyparkers were abroad; few dared break the rule which was then a serious offence. Those who could not observe the fast had to get dispensation from the Pope—on payment of course. In England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was a penal crime to eat meat during Lent and also on Fridays. The belief in fasting is happily dying out in Christendom. In benighted Christian countries old women and hysterical girls are still great sticklers to this religious custom. The belief in fasting as a religious act must have

originated from a central point, probably Egypt, as Prof. Elliot Smith and others think, and along with other religious ideas and practices disseminated far and wide along trade routes. It was probably due to the peculiar belief that the gods like men do penance and were not very pleased when men enjoyed themselves too much. It would appear, according to ancient beliefs, that the gods were always jealous of man's happiness and nothing pleased them so much as to see him move about with a long and sad face—thinking of the grave instead of making the best of this world.

* * *

Fasting is not, of course, the only act of self-sacrifice that man has done to please the gods. He has sacrificed every thing dear to him to attain this end. He has immolated his own children, destroyed himself and his fellow-men, tortured his body, covered himself with vermine, undergone unspeakable tortures and inflicted on others untold miseries in the belief that by doing so his gods are immensely pleased. Human sacrifice was a common practice in barbarous lands and the Jews, themselves, who boasted that their religion alone was inspired by the true God practised human sacrifice. It was quite a natural thing for Abraham to be commanded by Jehovah to kill his son Isaac!

* * *

While primitive peoples used to kill their fellow-men by thousands as sacrifices, modern people have replaced human beings by animals. Now-a-days sheep, goats, cows and cocks are the poor victims of this peculiar aberration of the human mind. There is still a deep-rooted belief among millions that flesh and blood

are very acceptable to the Deity. It is the duty of every Rationalist to discourage this belief and to point out its revolting and cruel nature. It is remarkable that the only religion which long ago recognized this was Buddhism. The Christians, it is true, have also discovered this, though the Roman Catholics believe that in the act of saying mass, the priest offers the body and blood of Christ as a supreme sacrifice to God, the Father, who had willed the death of his only son to redeem mankind from sin alleged to have been committed by the first parents of mankind!

* * *

Every now and then people in Europe decry against the superstitions that are still prevailing in the West. In some countries the masses in this respect are still living in the Middle Ages. In more advanced countries like France, England and Germany there is still a number of meaningless superstitions that are believed. Thus, one may not eat thirteen at table, one may not occupy a room No. 13 in a hotel. Salt may not be spilt, looking glass may not be broken and forks may not be thrown down. Mascots and amulets are very potent to avoid ill luck or to get luck. The possession of certain stores is a very lucky thing and torquise is such a stone; keeping pigeons brings calamity, howling dogs at night announce death and the curse of a priest brings malediction. They also believe that touching a blackman before going to the races is sure to bring luck. While in England some years ago the present writer was accompanied by a very dark Indian when he went to the New market races. Both of them were greatly surprised that every now and then a person would rush

and touch his companion. This was done without the slightest desire or intention of wounding the latter's feelings but as a real belief that touching him would bring luck to the person who did so when he would bet on horses. If a person on his way to the races accidentally comes across a discarded horse-shoe that would be treasured as a lucky find and would be displayed in a conspicuous part of his house.

* * *

Speaking of amulets, luck and ill luck reminds the writer of what he saw in a nursing home the other day when the little son of a lady doctor—a holder of university degrees—was to be operated for a throat complaint. The child was loaded with sacred medals, scapulars, garrotted with holy tapes and cords, while holy pictures of male and female saints were pinned all over the little bed and bundle of the same put under the little pillow. The little patient was fed with bonbons confectioned with the water of Lourdes just before the operation and holy water sprinkled over the operating table to the disgust of the surgeon.

It was really pathetic and disgusting to see a person who passes for an educated person doing such things. In this respect she and her ayah are of the same mentality and one wonders that education has not succeeded in improving her childish belief. There is no doubt that it will take many many years before such people are really enlightened and abandon the superstitions that their priests and nuns have taught them. These people pride themselves on their great faith in religion!

* * *

THE MYTH OF CREATION.

There are two theories which explain the existence of living things on Earth. One is the scientific theory that all living things were evolved from simple organisms to the more complex, the other is the religious one that all creatures were suddenly created by a divine being. In this article I do not propose to discuss the scientific theory which is that of evolution with which most rationalists are more or less acquainted. As the untenable religious theory is still believed by millions of people, it is necessary to trace how this belief came into existence. All primitive people have their own theory of creation. The most widespread, however, is the Biblical story which is shared by the Jews, the Christians and the Mahomedans, for the simple reason that they all derive it from the same source, namely an old Babylonian myth which was believed thousands of years before the Hebrew wrote their Bible.

A careful study of the Bible makes it clear that when that book was compiled there were two versions of the story of creation in Asia Minor. The book of Genesis, in which these stories are found, gives the two versions in a manner which makes it clear that two different writers wrote them. Biblical scholars call these two versions the Elohist and the Jehovist account respectively. The first or Elohist account commences with the first chapter of Genesis and ends with the third verse of the second chapter. The second or Jehovist version of creation begins with the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis and extends through the twenty-fourth verse of the third chapter. These names have

been given to these two versions because in one the word Elohim is used in referring to the Supreme Being and in the other Jehovah. Elohim which is a Hebrew word as is also Jehovah, translated literally means "The Gods". In the present Bible this has been rendered as "God". Jehovah translated literally means "The God of Gods"; in the present Bible it has been translated as "The Lord God". The differences between the Elohist and Jehovist accounts of the beginning of the earth, of plant and animal life, and of the human race, are concisely tabulated in the appended summary by a very distinguished theologian of the Anglican Church, Bishop John William Colenso (Colenso, who about sixty years ago was the Bishop of Natal, was shamelessly prosecuted on account of his masterly criticism of the Bible).

The following are two most noticeable points of difference between these two versions.

1. In the first, the earth emerges from the water and is, therefore, *saturated with moisture*. In the second "the Whole face of the ground" *required to be moistured*.
2. In the first, the birds and the beasts are created *before man*. In the second, *man is required before the birds and the beasts*.
3. In the first, "all fowls that fly" are made out of the *waters*. In the second "the fowls of the air" are made out of the *ground*.
4. In the first, man is created in the image of God. In the second, man is made of the dust of the ground, and

merely animated with the breath of life; and it is only after eating the forbidden fruit that "The Lord God said: Behold, the man has become *as one of us*, to know good and evil."

5. In the first, man is made Lord of the *whole earth*. In the second, he is merely placed in the garden of Eden, "to dress it and to keep it."

6. In the first, the man and woman are *created together*, as the closing and completing work of the whole creation—created also, as is evidently implied, in the same kind of way, to be the complement of one another, and, thus created, they are blessed *together*. In the second, the beast and birds are created *between* the man and the woman. First the man is made of the dust of the ground; he is placed by *himself* in the garden, charged with a solemn command, and threatened with a curse if he breaks it; *then the beasts and birds are made*, and the man gives names to them; and lastly after all this, *the woman is made out of his ribs*, but merely as a helpmate for the man.

Contrary to popular opinion there is nothing original or unique about these Hebraic Eden Myths. Similar myths and legends were told all over the world centuries before there was any sacred literature among the Hebrews. They were known in Chaldea, Phœnicia, Babylon, India, Persia, China, Egypt and Mexico. It is well known now that the Hebrews first came in contact with these stories when the Israelites were conquered and enslaved by Sargon II, King of Assyria (722—705 B.C.) Prof. George Smith of the Department of Antiquity, the British Museum, discovered Assyrian terra cotta tablets in Mesopotamia during the years of 1873—74, dating as far back as from 1500 to 2000 B. C, which give not

only the story of the Creation and Fall of Man, but a narrative of the Deluge and of the Tower of Babel as well. *The New York Truth Seeker*, April 1932, tells us that a recent find of Dr. Edward Chiera, assistant professor of Assyriology in the University of Pennsylvania, throws new light on the Babylonian origin of certain legends of the Hebrews. (As may be expected most Christian priests, especially Roman Catholics, deny that the Hebrews copied these myths from the Babylonians; they can offer no proof for their opinion except their conviction that it cannot be so.) Dr. Chiera's discovery is a tablet written in the Sumerian language. The inscriptions were carved on the clay tablet somewhere from 2100 to 2500 B.C. This tablet is thought to be merely a copy of a much older original, which in all probability dates back to around 4000 B. C. In the original Babylonian Eden Myth there is the story of a great conflict among the gods. They cannot decide whether man ought to be created or not. A "wise" reptile, the age-old dragon, Taimat, opposed the creation of the human race. The dragon fought against the great god Bel. Finally the God overcame the dragon by hurling a thunder bolt upon him. Opposition having been crushed, man was created. This conflict between Bel and the dragon bears a close analogy to the story of the revolution in heaven recorded in the Apocalypse:

"And there was a war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought against his angels.

"And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and

Satan, which devideth the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out of him " (Revelation xii, 7—9)

This warfare in the Heavenly Kingdom, with God and his angels on one side and the devil and his angels on the other, was the central theme of the old Persian religion. The Greeks and Romans also believed that there were frequent encounters between the gods ; the Egyptians believed that and so did the Mexicans. The fight between the powers of Light and Darkness also forms the central theme of the Zoroastrian religion. Zoroaster denominated the Power of Light as Ormuzd and that of darkness as Ahriman. The essence of Christian religion is regarding this fabulous warfare : Satan trying to outwit God and his determination to ruin Man, hence the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to redeem man and to protect him from the snares of that mighty devil. It is futile to speculate how man came by these grotesque beliefs. The phenomena of day and night, summer and winter, of good and evil may very well have inspired these ideas. As regards the originality of this belief in some form or other, Professor Elliot Smith is of opinion that it originated in Egypt thousands of years before Christ and that it spread along trade routes and other communications to the farthest end of the world. This would explain how it spread to America long periods before that continent became separated from Asia.

Others have tried to explain that such ideas could have originated independently, as it is contended that the mind of man at the same level of evolution must work in the same groove. If one were to believe certain pundits well versed in the

Vedantic literature, it would appear that the Hindus were more advanced in their conception of the origin of the world and living beings. There is a Brahman scholar in Poona who has actually published a booklet purporting to show that there are clear passages in the Rig Veda which show that our Earth and its inhabitants came into existence as modern science now teaches.

In a recent article on the antiquity of man, the "Statesman" of Calcutta says that most Christians do not like to be told that man was not created in the Garden of Eden some thousand of years ago, though there are overwhelming proofs that he has existed on Earth for hundreds of thousand years and that the cradle of humanity, as Darwin predicted, is most probably Africa. This, no doubt, is a naive remark. Though some Christian clergymen profess to accept the scientific theory of the origin of man and his antiquity on earth, contrary to Biblical teaching, there is no doubt that a general and candid acceptance of this fact would mean the end of Christianity as a supernatural religion. Consider for a moment the logical sequence of this acceptance. The story of the Fall of Man must be given up and with it the cardinal dogma of Christianity, namely the dogma of the Atonement and Redemption without which Christianity is absolutely meaningless. Small wonder that the more primitive creeds refuse to accept the scientific theory. Such creeds like the Fundamentalists of America prevent the teaching of Evolution because they rightly believe that to accept this means the end of the Bible which they worship as the word of God without which this religion becomes a sham. The Roman Catholics

profess that their Church leaves it an open question and has not yet pronounced one way or other about it. All the same, every true Roman Catholic priest is contemptuous of the scientific theory and holds to the Biblical account. According to some Catholic priests,

themselves, they ridicule the idea in their seminaries and their whole teaching is about the truth of the Fall of Man, his redemption by Christ and the final over-throw of the Devil on the day of Judgment.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

RATIONALISM AND THE BHAGAVAD-GITA.*

VII. The Collectivised Vision.

The exaltation of the individual is liable to be carried often too far. Humanists declare that whilst a sinful wretch breathes, or a single harlot carries on her trade, no saint could ever be made. Economists seek to replace competitive capitalism by an equitable distribution of the earth's resources among the needy, taking from each individual, the best that he can contribute to the common pool. It is claimed that the process of collectivisation will release labour from the trammels and distractions of bread-winning care and place its perspective on a higher, nobler footing than the mere factory-hand. The moral and material enfranchisement of every living human may not be within practical politics, but as the ideal to strive after, none else scarcely may displace it in importance. To work for the love of it is certainly to be preferred to work for wages, not to mention injurious acts committed through delusion.

Niyatam sangarahita maraga dveshatah
kritam

Aphalaprepsuna karma yattat satvika
muchyate

(Gita, XVIII, 23)

(Work which is natural, not related to its reward, done neither through love nor

hate, without expectation of wages, that is pure, the best.)

This is the recognition that genius is not made to order. Real merit does not court wages. The best in humanity has always been produced spontaneously, while the capitalist genius of our time chimes with the two lower forms of the Rajasic, and Tamasic effort.

Yattu kamepsuna karma sahankarena
va punah

Kriyate bahulayasam tadrajasa muda-
hritam

(XVIII, 24)

(Labour spent on achieving desired ends, or again through egoism, under sweating conditions, it is passionate effort.)

We are reminded of the war-time frenzies for peace-time production that grind out year-plans in less than their time. But passionate production is no sin. The colossal race in armaments among other nations carry the hall-mark of darkness.

Anubandham kshayam himsam anapek-
shyacha paurusham

Mohadarabhyate karma yattattamasa
muchyate

(XVIII, 25)

* The series consists of articles in issues of December 1933, page 12.

(Acts undertaken through delusion, irrespective of death and injury capacity or consequence, they originate from the dark force.)

Armageddon is certainly Tamasic, and not less. And the secret of its force lay in an overstressed individualistic conception of human economics. On the one hand the tragedy of European Politics that based its structure on capitalism and exclusive nationalism presents the ugly features of crumbling material individualisation, while on the other, an overstressed importance placed on spiritual renunciation has made the land of the Brahmins, the stage for naked Sadhus and fakirs, the idols of idealist individualisation. Dance single however much one may, one's foot needs must rest on another's heel. Our life depends, and in a large measure our well-being is knitted to most others. We can afford to fancy that we are happy, while those around us are suffering through misery and want. But that is a delusion caused by the fallacious process of abstracting away reality from life. We may turn away our face in disgust, or pretend to forget, but the evil is there, acting on us as on every other about us. The doubt that beset Arjuna is kindly.

Tasmanharha vayam hantum Dharta-
rashtra swabandhavan
Swajanam hi kadham hatva sukhinah
syama Madhava
(Gita I 37.)

(We should not kill the sons of Dhritarashtra, our kindred. For, how killing them may we be happy? O, Madhava?)

But nature is bigger than man. It never cares so much for the particular affections, as for the universal. It saves the species, but is in no way soft to-

wards the individual. It is immeasurable and unconcerned, (aprameyam, Gita, XI. 17) and calls upon man to follow its lead unmindful of his special relations.

Matkarmakrun matparamo madbhak-
tas sangavarjitah
Nirvairas sarvabhuteshu yah sama-
meti Pandava
(Gita, XI, 55.)

(He who acts for me, who takes my lead, devoted to me, having abandoned all his ties of kinship and friendship, and bearing no ill-will to any being, he reaches me, O, Pandava).

And Krishna is not always piping the tune of peace, laying aside the flute, he can blow the conch, Panchajanyam. (Gita, I, 15) in war.

Kalosmi lokakshaya kritpravriddhe
Lokan samahartu miha pravrittah
Ritepi tvan na bhavishyanti sarve
Yevasthitah pratyaneakeshu yodhah
(Gita, XI 32.)

(I am time resolved on destruction, and shall slay mankind. None of the fighters on either side shall survive, excepting you.)

It is written in the system of warfare, of rivalry on the battlefield (Rane sapatnan, XI, 34) as well in economic competition, that mighty forces like Drona, Bhishma, Karna, Jayadratha stand already overcome by time which pursues them to their logical end.

Mayaivaite nihatah purva meva,
Nimitta matram bhava savya sachin
(XI, 33)

(I have already sealed their fate, left-handed, you are to become but the apparent cause.)

This is but left-handed compliment to Arjuna's skill in archery. But who that has seen the majesty of the universe

yet clings to paltry events in battle and
in life's struggles?

Ihaikastham jagatkrutsnam pasyadya
sa characharam

Mama dehe Gudakesa yecchaya
drishtu michehasi (XI, 7)

(Here and now, behold the universe,
moving and unmoving, lying in my body,
O Gudakesha, and aught else of events
thou desirest to see.)

And in that infinitude of the macro-
cosm, where is man, the race ?

Nantam namadhyam napunastavadim
pasyami..... (XI 16)

(I do not see the beginning, the
middle or the end.) Nature is such a
stupendous incomprehensible, that we
cannot localise any event in relation to
the totality of its course, even as being
its middle state.

Rupam mahatte bahu vaktra netram,
maha baho bahu bahooru padam
Bahoodaram bahu danshtra karalam,
drishtva lokah pravyadhitah
tadham ... (Gita, XI, 23)

(The mighty form, having many mouths
and eyes, mighty arms, many shoulders,
thighs and feet, and stomach, and fearful
teeth, people see terror-struck, and so
am I.)

Is this the rise of the proletariat, the
mass upheaval that eliminates the indivi-
dual? Mouths to feed, stomachs to fill,
teeth that tear, feet that accomplish
triumphal marches, and arms that sub-
due all *contrary* events. Whither do the
sons of Dhritarashtra, and the multitude
of the kings, Bhishma, Drona, and noblest
warriors, enter? (XI, 26) " Vaktrani te
tvaramana visanti " (into thy gaping
mouths they rush, precipitately, XI, 27.)

Yadha nadinam bahavombu vegas
samudra mevabhimukha dravanti
Tatha tavami naraloka vira visanti
vaktranyabhi vijvalanti (XI, 28)

(As rivers flow towards the sea, rush-
ing impetuously, these warriors, kings of
the earth, fling themselves in thy flaming
mouths.)

Yadha pradiptam jvalanam patangah,
visanti nasaya samriddha vegah
Tataiva nasaya visanti lokas tavapi
vaktrani samridhavegah (XI, 29)

(As moths fly to destruction in the
flaming light, with quickened speed,
these people are entering thy mouths to
meet their end.)

The League of Nations may temporari-
ly spread a holy shroud on the terrific
aspects of human life. The Kellogg Pact
may note the pious wish to replace arms by
arbitration. Disarmament Conferences
may hold the world's destinies in politi-
cal balances. But the awkward fact re-
mains that the Viswa-rupa, the collec-
tive man, is hungry beyond further
endurance. An intimate knowledge of
the world-conditions, and not attach-
ment to national affinities and party-
doctorship can soften the distracted
humanity. Social science is larger than
individual emancipation, party politics,
or national economy. It is given to
few (divyam dadami te chakshuh, XI, 8)
to penetrate into the depths of entire life.

VIII. Freedom, the ethical basis.

The overpowering personality of the
leader is liable to be mistaken to have
swallowed the liberties of action of
those that follow the lead. By the injunc-
tion "sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam
saranam vraja" (abandoning all consider-
ations of duty or Dharma, seek shelter
under me alone, XVIII, 66) it would ap-
pear that moral responsibility may be
evaded, by the devotee blindly following
the preceptor. And the argument comes
handy for the latter that this world is a
fleeting joyless one. "Anityam asukham

loka mimam prapya bhajaswaman" (This world is impermanent and devoid of pleasure, and having been born here, worship thou Me, Gita, IX, 33). To instil unquestioning faith, none is so potent a factor as the method of distracting attention from the things of the world.

Manmana bhava madbhakto madyaji
mam namaskuru

Mamevaishyasi yuktvaiva matmanam
matparayanah
(IX, 34)

(Fix thy mind on me, be devoted to me, worship me, and prostrate thyself in front of me. Thus harmonised in me shalt thou enter me alone)

The identical language is repeated in sloka XVIII, 65, with the emphatic assurance "satyante pratijane priyosi me" (I pledge my troth, thy art dear.) All oaths are meant to create confidence. Theology swears when trust in its authority is sought. It also can bully.

"Adhachettva mahankaran na sroshyasi vinankshyasi" (if through egoism thou wilt not listen, destruction awaits, XVIII, 58). If inducement of the highest bliss is not enough, it can even assert that man has no choice in the matter at all.

Sarva karmanyapi sada kurvano mad-
vyapasrayah

Matprasada davapnoti sasvatam padam
avyayam
(XVIII, 56)

(Though ever acting, sheltered by me, through my grace will he be installed in the eternal indestructible seat.)

Yadahankara masritya nayotsya iti-
manyase

Midhyaisha vyavasayasthe prakristvam
niyokshyasi
(XVIII, 59).

(Affected by egoism, you think 'I shall not fight,' but your decision will not avail. Nature constrains you otherwise.)

Svabhavajena Kaunteya nibaddhassvena
karmana

Kartum nechchasi yanmohath karish-
yasyavasopithat

(XVIII, 60)

(Bound to act from your own nature, O, Kaunteya, you may delude yourself to desist, but shall fight through instinct which cannot be helped.)

That is a position that stultifies all teaching. When men are machines plied by nature, and the essence of that nature, Iswera (cf, XVIII, 61) the whole teaching of the Gita through inducement, threat and promise is rendered nugatory. Even if you do not learn and act in accord, you shall be acting just the same. That is the end of all ethics. But what the Gita contemplates is not blind instinctive fight. It sets its face against the renunciation of action through delusion and ignorance.

Nayatasyatu sanniyasah karmano
nopapadyate.

Mohattasya parityagas tamasah
parikirtitah

(XVIII, 7)

(Renunciation of acts that are enjoined is improper. Relinquishment through delusion is held to be dark, Tamasa).

To the doubt as to how the pure agent may sully his hand by engaging himself in bloody war, the answer is unmistakable.

Na dveshtyakusalam karma kusale
nanushajjate

Tyagi satva samavishto medhavi
chinmasamsayah.

(XVIII, 10).

(One who is unmindful of the reward of action, clothed in purity, having an intelligent grasp, his doubts cleared, has no aversion for the unpleasant course, nor does he wish for the pleasant one).

His fight is the duty, Dharma, enjoined by nature, in which his self is effaced.

Yesya nahankrito bhavo buddhiryasya
nalipyate.

Hatvapi sa imam lokannahanti na
nibadhyate.

(XVIII, 17).

(He who does not think of himself, and whose reason is not led by motive, though he kills people, he kills not, nor is he liable.)

In fighting for the cause, one has not to be swayed by consequence. In action through hesitation is evil. (Samsayatma vinasyati) And in fact there is really no escape from action.

Nahi dehabhruta sakyam tyaktum
karmanyaseshatah.

Yastu karma phala tyagi sa tyagit-
yabhidhiyate.

(XVIII, 11).

(No embodied being can totally cease action. He is held to have relinquished action, who has no craving for its fruit.)

The choice is between the three varieties of action, the pure, the passionate, and the dark ones, (Satva, rajas, tamas) and not in any sense between action and inaction. Even when thus discriminated, an inherent evil attaches to all action, as fire is enveloped in smoke.

Sahajam karma Kaunteya sadoshamapi
natyajet.

Sarvarambhabhi doshena dhumenagni-
riva vritah.

(XVIII, 48).

(One's duty, O, Kaunteya, though linked to evil, one ought not to abandon,

All undertakings are enveloped in evil, as fire in smoke).

This is clear recognition of the relativity of ethical values. There is nothing like the absolute good, and the absolute bad in conduct. The standard is not fixed and unalterable for all time. It is linked with knowledge, and wisdom that is distilled from it. Vignana is the scientific perception, wherefrom real Gnana emanates. Other sources lead to delusion, Moha, or midhyagnana. And no knowledge is true that results from prepossessions, or where reason is attached to objectives.

Asakta budhissarvatra nitatma vigata
spruhah

Naisharma siddhim paramam sannya-
senadhigatchati
(Gita, XVIII, 49)

(He whose reason is independent in every way, egoism subdued, and the lust quelled, his renunciation is the highest perfection free from obligation.)

An attachment to conventional relationships is as much a barrier to independent reason (asakta buddhi) as the desire to pursue a cherished object, or the subtler pandering to the vanity of egoism. Softness for established relations in life, and concern for the maintenance of the conventional forms of morality at all costs, are not warranted by the expanding vision of Buddhi Yoga, the Yoga of reason, the mainstay of human evolution. The persistent ring of the Gita is to get away from the trammels of darkness (Tamas) and move forward. To that end it enjoins the destruction where necessary of the old, idolised, foggy relationships. The usual exposition that would leave individual reason in the background, and insist that the Gita lays emphasis on devotion (Bhakti) is an effort at deriving

particular sanctions from overstressed importance given to certain expressions. But the devotion throughout is obviously centered on knowledge. "Buddhya visuddhaya yukte" (linked to pure reason,) occurs in XVIII, 51. Also see II 49, 50, 51. Budhi-yoga occurs in X, 10, and again in XVIII, 57. While in the former, devotion leads to discrimination or the Yoga of reason, in the latter context, discrimination leads to devotion. But the process is clearly enough indicated, whereby concentrated attention to the secrets of the universe, unattended by the mercenary ambition of judging merit from results gained, is the highest path of the Satvic Yogi. The man who has gained an insight into knowledge, cannot remain unaffected by it. His dharma, or nature, assumes a change, and thereafter he acts in the light of that knowledge. So acting, he doth not incur

sin. (Svabhava niyatam karma kurvan napnoti kilbisham, XVIII, 47) And the final basis for individual responsibility for conduct is suggested unmistakably.

Iti te gnana makhyatam guhyad guhyataram maya

Vimrusyaitadaseshena yadhechchasi tadhakuru

(I have taken you into the secret of wisdom. Discuss within thyself fully, and then, act up to your choice. Gita, XVIII, 63.)

When the effects of inducement, threat or promise are erased from the mind of the subject, it is well to remind him of the knowledge imparted, and the responsibility of making the choice. It is a recognition that, in any event, man is not a machine, but a moral agent.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

BIRTH CONTROL IN INDIA.

Dr. Hutton's remarks in connection with the last census report have had the effect of waking up the advocates as well as the opponents of Birth Control. Even the most orthodox journals, to whom the subject used to be taboo, not because they were genuinely orthodox, but simply because of their devotion to the "twin gods of circulation and advertisement revenue", had to pay at least lip service to truth and make a pretence of fairness by opening their columns to a so-called discussion of birth-control, taking due care of course to suppress correspondents like me who are apt to have an undue regard for truth irrespective of tradition, and allowing free scope to half-witted ignoramuses whose mainstay is "the eternal verities" or some other verity of eternal rubbish.

Really speaking, the census report was not at all a surprise to thoughtful people who had long known and commented on the undesirable increase in the Indian population, and the question of birth-control has fortunately such a direct bearing on individual happiness that in spite of a public show of lofty principles and impenetrable stupidity, even the half-witted ignoramuses referred to often learn the wisdom born of necessity when they personally feel the pinch of a growing family. This is why the boasted advocates of self-control can never expect to show any practical results. It is indeed the height of stupidity to propose self-control as a means of birth-control. Once the desirability of birth control is perceived, unpractical idealists like Mahatma Gandhi do not even get a hear-

ing, except from those who find self-control easy and want to parade it, forgetting that, as Dr. Norman Haire neatly puts it, if a motor can be stopped easily, it may not always mean that the brakes are strong, but merely that the motor is weak. At any rate, either way, these are not normal people and we need not waste any space over them. Let me say, however, in passing, that it is ridiculous to call self-control a natural method. The sex instinct is a natural instinct and to keep it unsatisfied for years at a time is certainly not natural and, in the opinion of modern medical authorities, is often positively harmful.

Admitting that the man in the street cannot rely on self-control, modern scientific methods are the only practical ones. It is pretended by some writers that the principal difficulty about the practice of birth control in India is the religious idea that one must have a son if one is to be saved from a particular kind of hell. But even for religious people who admit this function of a son, one son is quite enough for the purpose and except in cases where daughters are born in succession and a son obstinately refuses to be, there is no harm in preventing conception after a son is born. Besides, very few people indeed are genuinely religious and most religious people are quite willing to consider practical suggestions if it does not involve open irreligion. Even religious people will not insist on having the maximum number of children possible if they are shown a way out. The real difficulty therefore is: How to bring the necessary knowledge within reach of the illiterate classes? As for the expense involved in using the admittedly best artificial means, it does not come to more than a rupee a month, and though

even this may be too much for the very poorest, it is within the reach of many poor people, at least those classes who bring up their own children and do not father them on others or let them beg in the street. To bring up one or more children will certainly cost more, so it is in their own interest to pinch themselves a little if necessary and spend that rupee on prevention. In the case of the very poorest, who find even this too much, charity will find its proper field in a free distribution of cheap means. Though these may be a little less sure, they will greatly reduce the birth-rate and have a general wholesome effect on the population.

I have seen it stated by a press correspondent, who relied on English authorities, that birth control is an expensive job and therefore impracticable for the poor population of India. There are cheap contraceptives which any well established birth control clinic could teach people how to obtain and how to use them. They are so cheap that charitable organisations could supply them without incurring heavy cost.

A correspondent said in a local paper that the average income in India is Rs. 5 a month. This surely includes the people who earn nothing at all and depend on charity or on their relatives. In fact this average is of no use for any practical purpose on the question of birth control in a country like India.

Any progress on the question is sure to be hampered by religious fanatics and the ignoramuses who fill our Municipalities and other public bodies to a large extent. The Bombay and Karachi Municipalities have thrown out proposals for giving birth control knowledge. The Christian champions of ignorance in

Madras and Karachi hold protest meetings against this attack on ignorance, the stronghold of all religions and the stock in trade of priests. It remains to be seen, however, how long these people can hold out against common sense. It is not the population question that appeals to the individual so much as the prospect of personal advantage, and in this case a perfectly legitimate personal advantage. As a hopeful sign, I may mention that I recently received from the Civil Surgeon of Belgaum a request for suggestions for the practical spread of birth-control information, as the District Local Board of Belgaum had passed a resolution to that effect. Whether it is in their power to do anything practical I cannot say, but wherever there is a free dispensary or any doctor or even a nurse, arrangements can be made to supply the information free of cost, and if funds were available, even the means to poor people. The details would have to be studied, but it should not be difficult if there is a band of willing workers.

Mysore has already officially established birth control clinics, but it is folly

to rely on Government in such matters. Governments, like priests, have vested interests in conservatism and oppose change so far as possible. Interested parties will always hamper public bodies from carrying out any general plan of reform. These are the real enemies. Much capital is made out of Indian superstition, but some Christian sects are not any better, and missionaries encourage superstition, whether from ignorance or selfishness. It is a welcome sign that people are beginning to think for themselves instead of leaving their interests to the tender mercies of governments or priests. Individuals and private bodies can start the work without waiting for anybody. There is fortunately no law against the spread of birth-control knowledge and a good deal can be done even by individuals. I have recognized this long ago and for the last twelve years, have been giving the information to anybody who asks for it. Priests can gnash their teeth and missionaries can protest, but it does not matter. The work has to be done in the public interest.

R. D. KARVE.

WOMEN DEMAND BIRTH CONTROL CLINICS.

**Calcutta Conference Regards Spread Of Scientific Knowledge On Subject
Among Parents As Very Important.**

[The Women of India are to be congratulated on their determination to have birth control clinics established in this country. Unlike the Catholic women of Karachi who opposed the same, the women of India rightly think that in a poor country like India the encouragement of excessive birth rate among the indigent is a great evil. It would appear that at the session of the All-India Women's Conference held at Calcutta last month the pros and cons of Birth Control were discussed in all their aspects. The orthodox views of immorality and natural laws, etc, did not weigh with these progressive women of India—Bravo! ED. REASON.]

Resolutions demanding the removal of legal disabilities of women, the abolition of immoral traffic in women and children, abolition of intoxicants, removal of untouchability, the spread of scientific knowledge on birth control among parents, abolition of capital punishment, rural reconstruction and compulsory registration of Dais and midwives were passed at the concluding session of the All-India Women's Conference at Calcutta.

Clinics Wanted.

Interesting discussion centred round the resolution demanding birth control which runs thus :

"In view of the appalling hygienic and economic conditions of society, this Conference is of opinion that immediate efforts be made to spread scientific knowledge on birth control amongst parents through the medium of recognised clinics."

The resolution was moved by Mrs. S. N. Ray, who first sought to meet the arguments that were advanced generally against it either on the ground of morality or considering the discussion of the subject indecent. These persons still believed in the antiquated ideas and thought that there was something almost

criminal and wicked about the subject. Those who opposed the subject on religious grounds did not realise that religion was based on comparative ideas and that true religion could almost hold its own and yet be in the vanguard of progress. There was still another section of people who thought that the knowledge of the subject would give an impetus to loose living and moral turpitude. The tragedy of the situation was this that those people who would have liking for loose living were not generally influenced by a conference like theirs, nor by the knowledge obtained in clinics.

From practical point of view the subject of imparting knowledge to unmarried youths both male and female was very important. As the mothers of the race are responsible for its healthy development, it is absolutely necessary that they should tear aside the veil of false modesty and prudence and tackle the problem. There was no other way if they wanted to improve the physique of the race to take up the question of sex hygiene and birth control—only then they would reach to the root of many of the most important national problems affecting the modern Indian society.

Mrs. S. Mehta supporting the resolution said that whatever be the angle of their vision, if they wanted to look at it either from economic, eugenic or medical point of view they could not but come to the conclusion that birth control was absolutely necessary." As regards "the fuss of the moralists." Mrs. Mehta said that birth control would improve the chance in life and physique of their children and it would slow down the rate of multiplications.

Resolution Opposed.

Miss Rani Ghosh who opposed the resolution contested that many members of the audience would question her right to speak on the subject as she had not the experience of labour that a woman undergoes when a child is born. But it appeared to her to be undignified for the Conference to discuss openly a subject which should be settled between a husband and wife in the bed-room. She could well remember the agitation they had when the subject came up for discussion in Madras and also in Lucknow when the resolution on the subject was carried with great majority. She enquired what practical work had been affected by the Conference in the direction within the course of a year or two.

To judge the number that one wished to have in the family by advocating birth-control seemed to her to be a futile task. All of them have their own standards of value by which they would measure the worth of the pleasures, privileges and duties, comforts, and satisfaction of life. What was meat for one might prove poison for another. By championing the cause of birth-control at this time in this country they would be beaten as a nation by a decrease in its numerical strength. Could India at this critical stage of her

history afford a cause which would decrease her number. She asked the audience to realise the responsibility for having to take such a course when the new reforms were to come and when for the army, navy and for the development of economic and material resources of the country they would be handicapped. At the present moment India was stepped in darkness and men and women who were real representatives of India were in want of food not because they had not been taught to control the births but because adequate provision had not been made for them for the development of their physical, mental and moral capabilities. Let those who favoured birth-control teach the masses to respect themselves, to control their purse instead of births.

A Mother Speaks.

Mrs. A. Kale supporting the resolution said by way of introducing herself that she was the mother of five children while she found it to be a matter of wonder that most of them who opposed the resolution were unmarried. Many of them were under the wrong impression that birth-control meant birth prevention. Nobody would bother with the number of children if adequate provision for their upbringing could be arranged for. Nobody would question the fine civilisation that was developed in India once when other nations like pilgrims had to come to India for learning. But the question was the present position in which they were placed. Birth control was a means that was absolutely necessary for getting rid of the present crisis. As soon as it would be over when India would be able to adequately maintain her children the method should be discarded at once. Nobody had held the view that birth control was the only method which should

remain in the Indian social regulations for all time to come. The instance of Germany had been referred to. She did not think that the comparison was justified, but if it was she would ask Miss Ghosh to go to Germany and settle there. As regards the question of immorality she would draw the attention of the audience to the practical aspect. As long as there would remain the natural attraction between sexes there would occur in spite of rigidity of religion a small percentage of immorality. But that could and should not deter them from adopting a course which was meant only for the betterment of the race and which would help women from realising that they were not merely procuring machines.

Mrs. Khemchand opposed the resolution. She said that she opposed it on principle. The poor did not practice birth control. But the rich who would well afford to bear children, practised it.

Two Harijan ladies, Mrs. Laxmi Bai Naik and Mrs. Joyabai Chaudhury, took part in the proceedings.

Miss Khadja Begum Ferozuddin of Lahore strongly opposed the resolution and said that if the birth-control advocated to save India from over population why was the Conference then backing up widow remarriage? Instead of pleading for birth-control to save the lower classes from producing too many children the best method would be to educate them and raise their standard of living and moralify. Teach them, she said, Brahmacharya and "Atma Sanjam" (self-control) which had been the key note of Indian education. Only then you would be able to elevate your land. "You could never" she concluded "raise a nation by moral degradation."

The resolution was put to vote and carried by a huge majority.

PIGS FROM THE PIG-STY; ARE WE?

It is a common experience to all of us to meet occasions when people refuse to see the opposite side. Such an occasion has occurred again during the last few months on the subject of "Birth-Control." The Catholics, men and women, have gone into hysterics over this question and have passed resolutions couched in language which makes us, one and all, non-followers of that religion, wonder at their bigotry. To them controlling the birth-rate is highly immoral because their priests say so and they are believed to be infallible as they are inspired from heaven. I wonder if the voices they hear are like the one Mr. Gandhi heard. **It is a thousand pities that we do not**

possess plates of ectoplasm on which we could record these inner voices! To the Catholics all supporters of birth control measures are immoral and have "filthy minds". As I am writing this, the scribe in heaven is putting a black dot against my name and the devil in hell is adding some more lumps of sulphur and brimstone to his fire in anticipation of my visit.

Catholics are against Birth-Control because their Church forbids it. That is their only argument. Their Church forbids it because it is against the Natural Law. They are very considerate! According to this Law, we should live in darkness after sunset. Since God

created this world in that way he meant that we should have darkness except for a little candle light of the moon, probably an after-thought when the utter darkness bewildered him. Yet we have lights, and even the churches are lit not only during night but even during day. I do not want to multiply examples. Man to-day counts his progress by the conquest he has made over nature, even in the matter of sex. Our Catholic friends tell us that according to this Natural Law anything that goes against his fellow man is wrong. It is difficult to follow how controlling the size of my family should in any way upset my neighbour. This is certainly entirely a personal matter. When we neighbours feel that we have to destroy another group of neighbours and we are all unanimously decided about it, then probably we will have to do our best to raise the sinews of war, men and money. In that contingency limitation of my family would be against our common interest. But war is not our goal. Ever since religion has been on the wane and people have forgotten to worship the Lord of Battles we have made peace, everlasting peace, our goal. We want to make the best of what this life offers us and we still cling to that freedom to dispense our personal affair in the way we want.

The Holy Church brings in the relation to God. It is no use pointing out that the existence of that being or whatever he is, has not been proved satisfactorily. To the believers it is an article of faith. Suppose this God exists and he controls all our actions. He is said to know what is best for us. Then, if in his infinite wisdom he allows me only thirty rupees a month, if he is "all-loving," then he must pat me on my back if

I do not have any children. He must say "Well done, my boy, you have cut the coat according to your cloth!" The Catholic Church is here one with me and its God. But the difference arises when the means are considered. To it "self-control" is the only permissible method.

Since conception is a chance, self-control would mean that I will have to be continent all my life. But no, the Church is not so hard; it realises that sexual satisfaction should not be completely denied. So the learned and holy priests are busy spreading knowledge about "safe periods," knowledge which must be safely distributed through the confessional. The present knowledge of these "safe periods" has been laboriously gathered by "filthy-minded" men who are now realising that no period is 100 per cent safe and that many times they are 100 per cent unsafe. But that is all that the Catholic Church offers without impairing the purity of matrimony and lowering men and women to the level of beasts. Those "Safe periods" are based on animal life, forgetting that man's condition in this respect has been profoundly altered.

However unsafe these "safe periods" may be, still all public spirited Catholics, be they doctors or principles of schools, must not only uphold but press the Catholic point of view! There are a large number of Catholics who feel seriously disturbed when on coming home in the evening, they find that the hungry mouths they have to feed are daily increasing. Some of them who abhor any kind of birth control knowledge try "safe periods". God appreciates their virtue and blesses them with more children! Don't forget that every little tiny

tot that dies after baptism goes to heaven and from there prays for blessings upon his parents who were instrumental in offering him the chance of eternal happiness. Still if God is everywhere, why can't these prayers be offered from this earth and be just as effective?

Others want to take no risks and either repress or sublimate their passion. To many this alternative is not suitable nor is it in the best interest of society. Majority of these that practise self-control are not able to do that always. Any doctor friend of yours will tell you the story that many mothers say "Well I kept away for three years but I was caught for the first time". This would not matter if there were no children but if this comes on top of five or six children then the mother certainly does not feel very happy about the accident. Then come mutual recriminations. But then you cannot expect God to watch such small details in this vast universe.

Some gentleman in Bombay looked with dismay at the prospect of a pig-sty morality. Evidently he thought that sex-life would be what it is amongst the pigs if knowledge of contraceptives was wide-spread. I do not know what is the special weakness of pigs regarding their mating affair. Perhaps he means want of control and secrecy. But the gentleman who spoke is a Catholic and he forgets that the pigs do not offend against the Natural Law. They let nature take its course and suffer themselves to be entirely led by it. Nature controls them in this respect and they are totally indifferent about the result. Must man do the same? For them sex is nature, just as food is. This is just what we will be if the doctrine of the holy pure Church

is followed. The advocates of Birth-Control want us to behave as human beings and continue as human beings. Sexual desire is present in every human being of a certain age, it is a natural urge which does not necessarily make people become Satyrs or nymphomaniacs. It is true that we might become more liberal in our sex ideas at a later stage, but there are restrictions which even the universal knowledge of contraceptives and universal freedom of action will not be able to remove. You see that in countries like Russia where after the first spell of freedom, sex-life is more restrained. This is not because of state legislation but from the innate sense of human beings. Should a questionnaire be circulated amongst married couples who consider children a blessing of God and are anxious to have as many as they can have, such a questionnaire will elicit the information that sex life is not necessarily excessive amongst the greater number. You cannot ascribe this restraint to Catholicism because, even before Christ, the pagan nations did not spend their life only in sex and its pursuit. But it is the spirit of the "original sin" which is driven deep into the mentality of the Catholic that prevents him from giving credit to the goodness of man and his progress in civilisation.

Catholics tell us that moral law and conscience veto intemperance, stealing and murder. They put restriction of the family by artificial means on the same level. Whereas the first three are depriving somebody else of their right the latter does nothing of the sort. "But are you not depriving the unborn one the chance of its entering the kingdom of heaven?" Yes, but if it is justifiable

to deny that chance by abstinence, by "safe periods," then why is it wrong to do the same, by safer methods? If it is not considered wrong to do sexual acts *ad lib* after conception has taken place why should it be so when conception has not taken place or is not going to take place.

But all this talk of moral law and conscience veto is all BUNK written in the largest letters conceivable. The Catholic Church teaches that the pleasures of this world have to be shunned and of these pleasures sexual pleasure is especially held as most sinful. According to that Church sexual pleasure outside matrimony is sinful. The Church has to reconcile itself to an inconsistency. Before a man and woman stand before a priest and promise to be man and wife even the remotest sexual desire is sin. But once the wedding bells have pealed, then all is permitted. The only way they come out of this is by professing that sex is only a means to an end, the end being the begetting of children. This is the primary function of marriage for which all that can should marry. How far this is true I leave for your readers to decide. But I wonder if sexual indulgence is sinful after conception has taken place! It ought to be since then it cannot be a means to an end.

For long men and women have rebelled against these ideas of the Church. Yet they had to stay quiet. Society was hard on the illegitimate child or child born outside wedlock. To-day that attitude is rapidly changing. Indeed our whole attitude on sex is changing. Novels and other publications write on sex freely without any prudishness and no one feels ashamed of gaining knowledge in this respect. It is this that the Church is afraid. Unfortunately for the Church, the disillusionment of religion and rending of the veil that covered sex have more or less come on together. The last war did it. Humanely one cannot understand why sexual urge should be considered filthy and dirty. Educated men and women now begin to think otherwise; they believe that sexual knowledge is instructive and should be freely imparted. Recent literature under the guidance of Freud and his pupils has brought into prominence the fact that an ignorance of sexual questions has been the cause of morbid sex repression. Men and women whose best thoughts were sapped or distorted by this constant repression are now free to lead civilisation. A knowledge of birth control is bound to add to the happiness of life in general.

ALI AKBAR.

THEISM AND 'EVOLUTION.'

It is frequently stated that Science is the greatest enemy of religion. The underlying truth of this saying is easily comprehensible, for the more there is of light the less will be the darkness. In other words, religion which is based on faith, miracle, mystery and superstition cannot stand the searchlight of Science which is *par excellence* a pursuit after truth under the guiding hands of knowledge and reason. But, in practice, scientists are more often than not as little free-thinking and as much superstitious as fanatical priests and irrational bigots. This gulf between theory and practice between conviction and conduct, is perceptible both in the East and the West. Only, the East being proverbially more religious and consequently less reasoning than the West, the gulf appears to be pretty wide on this side of the globe. I purpose, however, in the following article to take a restricted view and to examine modern religious belief and practice in the light of only one theory of Science, the Theory of Evolution.

All the great religions of the world have a common basis in theism or belief in the existence of a God supernaturally revealed to man. It is this God who is supposed to have created the world and all the original inhabitants thereof. One fine morning—unfortunately there was no morning then, for all was chaos, so says the "Holy Bible"—God said "Let there be light: and there was light." Another day God took it into his head to create

man in His own likeness. So by a wave of his wand—to borrow the idiom of necromancy,—He created a man and a woman and told them, to the great chagrin of our birth-control enthusiasts: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." By this miraculous process of calling on nobody to bring forth the shining firmament, the fertile land, the delicious fruit, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air God created the world and its denizens all. Thus, or nearly thus, do all religions explain the creation of the world.

This amusing account of the origin of the world held the field from the time of creation—nobody *knows* when, but everybody *says* some thousands or millions or billions of years ago as their respective religion or superstition dictates—right up to the latter half of the nineteenth century. No doubt, there were dissenters and unbelievers even in olden days. There was Sankhya, for instance, whose system of philosophy did away so thoroughly with God and creation as to appear almost atheistic. There was Buddha whose religion and philosophy in their pristine form show definite agnostic tendencies. There was again Epicurus whose philosophy is striking modern in its materialistic note. In times nearer to our own, we hear of Vallabhacharya who may rightly be called "the Indian Epicurus." But all these thinkers were essentially philosophers *qua* philosophers, that is to say, logicians well read in the

ancient lore and endowed with sufficient independence of mind to rationally analyse the old system and to lay bare its holes and pitfalls. But in doing so they did not call in the aid of Science as much as they requisitioned the services of Logic. The first great blow to religion therefore, came from quite an unexpected quarter, a quarter which was itself unconscious of the blow it was delivering—Science. It was with Darwin's publication in 1859 of his famous "Origin of Species" wherein he propounded his "Theory and Evolution" that the people were set a thinking about creation and matters cognate.

Darwin never attempted to do away with the idea of an original creation, for he thought out, explained and substantiated on scientific lines the gradual evolution of higher organisms from lower, the lowest in the order of evolution being the protoplasm, that is, the essence of life which permeates all organisms. But, whence came this protoplasm? Did it come out of nothing or was it created by somebody? Darwin found himself in a quandary when faced with these questions and sought the aid of a creator, not the Lord God of the Bible who created in pairs all the living things that now exist, but a miniature Lord God whose one and only handiwork was the creation of the protoplasm. As Max Muller says, "Darwin himself went so far as to maintain most distinctly that his system of nature required a creator who breathed life into it in the

beginning." Max Muller: *Six Systems*, P. 326.)

Now, if the Darwinian concept of evolution were true, is belief in and reverence for a Creator called for? I would answer that the belief is fully warranted for the protoplasm was of divine making; but, the warranty for reverence is neither obvious nor indisputable.

Reverence is but the consummation of gratitude, personal or impersonal. No man will revere another, not even God, for nothing. So, if man reveres God, it can only mean, that he is grateful to Him for all that He has created or done for him. But, he must be a very poor man who will revere a God who has created evil and suffering in the world. So, the whole problem of reverence to and worship of hangs on the answer to the question whether God has created such a good and happy world as to merit our gratitude, regard and reverence.

There are facile optimists who, though not fool-hardy enough to maintain that everything in this world is good and as it ought to be, are confident that the good will overcome the evil in not a long time to come. Their reverence for the Creator is unshakable, for wherever they turn the hand of Providence stares them in the face. Like Mr. Chesterton, they see a living miracle in every child. On the other hand, there are incorrigible pessi-

mists who discern the hand of Satan in every work of God. To them the world is a vast expanse of misery, exploitation, torture and its creator, a short-sighted, mischief-making, Satanic imp, and to revere him is the greatest folly of man. Obviously, neither view is or can be correct, for we realise that there is good as well as evil in this world, and we also realise the possibility that a good thing under one set of circumstances may become a bad one under another, and vice versa. But, who created this evil? Certainly God, for it would be against all canons of candour to maintain that God created only the good things of this world, and to leave the evil ones hang in mid air. Even Mr. Gandhi admits that, "He (God) has no evil in himself and yet if there be evil, He is the author of it." But Mr. Gandhi evades the issue when he explains further that though God is the author of evil, He is "yet untouched by it"-like the manufacturers, I suppose, who turn out their products "untouched-by hand"!

It goes without saying that if we all turn pessimists, -I do not wish for such a consummation-reverence for God may be cast to the winds. But, suppose, we develop a fancy for optimism, what can rationally be our attitude? To what extent should our gratitude extend?

It may be said, in the first place, that it is very difficult to establish a clear, tangible and continuous contact between the man of to-day and the God who created the world in the bad old days. The relationship is untraceably remote, for not we, but only our antediluvian ancestor that owes his being to God-if the Scriptures are to be believed. We are the results, not of creation but of procreation. But, in the light of 'Evolution'

it is not our original ancestor, but the protoplasm which was the lowest rung in the ladder of our ancestor's evolution, that was created by God. This makes the relationship all the more distant and all the more hazy. The fact of relation, however, cannot be gainsaid. Secondly, if man is to revere God, the ultimate creator, it stands to reason that he must revere as much, if not more, his immediate procreator. He must revere an engineer, a manufacturer, an architect, a carpenter, a brick-mason more than he reveres God, for God's creation was an effortless affair whereas the production of man is by the sweat of his brow. Let our theists ponder over this!

A word about the common man, and I have done. To the man in the street the belief in God comes home with irresistible force in the shape of miracles. Almost all the religions of the world owe their popularity and numerical strength as much to the miracles wrought by their saints and prophets as to their doctrines and philosophy. So, even to this day when a man witnesses something miraculous, something wonderful, something which he cannot explain, he seeks the aid of a preternatural agency, either a God or a devil. But this is purely an outcome of loose thinking, for the fact of our being unable to account for a particular thing only proves our ignorance thereof and not the existence of a God. Any number of illustrations may be cited to bear out this contention. When the steam engine was introduced into India, it was supposed to have its motive power in the machinations of the devil, for our ancestors of those days could not bring themselves to believe that the innocuous steam with which they were all familiar could work such wonders. So was the case with the aeroplane, with the

wireless and with a host of other inventions which have greatly redounded to man's progress and prosperity. Nobody now believes that these inventions are the handiwork of supernatural or preternatural agencies. Again, in mediæval times, plague, pestilence and many other preventible nuisances were regarded as God's punishments for man's sins, for with the knowledge then

available these phenomena could not be explained in any other way. But, to-day a fourth form boy will be able to explain these "miracles" that confounded the mitred heads of bygone days. Suffice it to say, that to link miracle with God and the unseen working of His hand is but an act of desperate ignorance.

S. V. VENKATARAMANAN.

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD.

"New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth,

They must upward still and onward,
who would keep abreast of truth.—Lowell.

The greatest blows that religion ever experienced since the Renaissance were the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, both the work of Englishmen. These writers were thorough in their methods, Charles Darwin writing after thirty years' investigation, whilst Herbert Spencer was forty years perfecting his system of Synthetic Philosophy.

There have been no grander intellectual achievements since Edward Gibbon took his memorable walk under the acacias at Lausanne on the completion of his memorable *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Spencer, unlike Darwin, never startled the religious world, and his utter want of orthodoxy was not fully realized until his *Data of Ethics* appeared. Then Christian theologians were annoyed to find that the man who had taken his place quietly as the leading English philosopher of the nineteenth century was as thorough a Freethinker as Charles Bradlaugh.

Standing outside all churches and all creeds, he built up his own philosophy by science alone.

It is no disparagement to Darwin to say that Spencer's system of Synthetic Philosophy, which puts things together and does not pull them to pieces, is the vaster scheme of the two. Darwin's name may have been execrated in every pulpit in Christendom, but Spencer's work was far more comprehensive and far more deadly to Orthodoxy. The two works made a thunderous engine of attack, from which Christianity is still reeling.

Spencer, in his writings, sought to show that all phenomena, physical and psychological, are the natural products of elementary matter and its laws, these being modes of operation of the primal law of what he calls the "persistence of force." His scheme, probably the vastest ever conceived by the human mind, embraced the story of the evolution of the universe from formless stuff into solar systems, the process being the advance from the simple to the complex, from the indefinite to the coherent. This same process was shown to be in operation in the life-history of the earth. No break

between things inanimate and animate being assumed, mind in the lower animals and man, man's social and intellectual development, are in unbroken sequence shown to be part of the eternal order. The Synthetic Philosophy, as the author chose to call it, is nothing more nor less than the law of evolution, as exemplified in nature and in man, in the animal realm and the vegetable and human, the sphere of sense, and the sphere of conscious and moral aspiration.

The glory and triumph of Spencer is that his philosophy rests on ascertained scientific knowledge. While other philosophers have evoked various extraneous agencies to account for the difference between man and the rest of the world, he trusted to evolution, the law which connects the thoughts of a Shakespeare with the obscure movements of an ascidian on the rocks. Spencer had a harder task than Darwin, because he took all knowledge for his province, whilst Darwin specialized.

The general admission of evolution is the deathknell of religious orthodoxy. It sweeps away at once the old Oriental legends which men have been taught to consider a sufficient explanation of all things. The legend of a fallen race disappears, and with it goes the myth of the devil, and all other strange and monstrous explanations that were necessary to harmonize the theological theory put forward by Priestcraft. With it also goes the bibliolatry which, like so many other idolatries, has served to enchain and cramp the human intellect. The Christian Bible, which is so largely the Bible of the Ancient Hebrews, must descend from its lofty pedestal and take its rank on the modest library shelf which contains the many sacred books of other and older nations.

Nothing more momentous has taken place since the Renaissance. Strangest of all, this intellectual lever, which will finally overthrow all existing creeds, has come among us so silently that many have scarcely noticed its approach. Opposition there has been, as there is to all new truths, but compared with the momentous issues at stake, the opposition has been trifling. Silently and steadily, for over seventy years, Evolution has been resistlessly pushing its way till no educated man or woman attempts to contravene it. There has been no "bridal birth of thunder peals," while this "great thought has wedded fact." To the clergy and their congregations, whose very innocence will not permit them to follow intelligently the course of modern scientific thought, the new theory must appear like Banquo's ghost to the amazed Macbeth. They look up suddenly from their crosses, candles, and their prayers, and see the awful shape in front of them. "Adam" and "Eve" and the talking snake are driven out from the fabled Garden of Eden, not by an angel with a flaming sword, but by the scientists.

Since Darwin's death, the clergy who formerly denounced the dead scientist with the whole wicked vocabulary of theological abhorrence, have, characteristically and hypocritically, claimed him as one of their flock. They buried this black sheep among the illustrious obscure in Westminster Abbey, and calmly pretend that the teachings of Evolution are in harmony with the fable of Eden and the story of Jonah and the whale. Only two religious bodies have been reasonably honest in this matter. Poles asunder in so many respects, the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army have remained faithful to ignorance. On no

condition will these two bodies part with "Eve" and the apple and the talking snake in "Eden." Romanists and Salvationists alike believe that Darwin and Spencer, and their colleagues, are to-day suffering the tortures of the damned. These uncultured people no more believe in evolution than they understand the alphabet of science. But those who are trying to effect a compromise between the irreconcilables, religion and science, from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the very glib speakers on Pleasant Sunday Afternoon platforms, are assuring their audiences that the great truths of evolution are all in harmony with the Oriental legends in the Old and New Testaments, and that the discoveries of science are an assistance to religion.

Slowly, with lapses into its "lov'd Egyptian night," men and women are shaking themselves free from the chains of superstition. Bewildered by the new light, missing at first the guiding hand of their erst-while pastors and masters, they stand amazed on the threshold of the future. The fundamental question of man's place in nature has been solved, and the wide acceptance of evolution has already begun to bear fruit in all practical affairs of life. Sooner or later, in spite of all the priests of Christendom, it will lead mankind to a happier, more consummate condition of life, and to loftier ideals.

MIMNERMUS.

"From The Free Thinker."

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

"REASON" CASE.

Case No. 10/W of 1934.

To,
The Chief Presidency Magistrate,
Bombay.

Bombay 4th January 1934.

Sir,

I beg to report that one Mr. C. L. D'Avoine, is the Editor and Publisher of a monthly Magazine of Bombay entitled

"Reason" This magazine is the Journal of "The Rationalist Association of India" Empire Automobile Building Queen's Road Bombay.

In the September 1933 issue of the said magazine appear the following passages :—The paragraph beginning with the words "Some Religions, Catholicism for instance and ending with the words

"said his prayers" in the article headed "Religion and Morality" published at page 3 and 7 respectively. As the aforesaid passages constitute an offence punishable under Section 295 A Indian Penal Code I would request that your Worship will be pleased to issue a warrant for the arrest of the said Mr. C. L. D'Avoine.

The Governor in Council has autho-

rised the prosecution of Mr. C. L. D'Avoine.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient Servant
Sd.

Inspector of Police
General Branch.

Lyon examined on oath.

Warrant bailable Rs. 500 and one surety

Sd. H. P. Dastur,
4-1-34.

In the Court of the Chief Presidency Magistrate Bombay

Case No. 10/W of 1934.

Inspector Lyon.....*Complainant*

vs

Mr. C. L. D'Avoine.....*Accused*

Charge : Under S. 295-A I.P.C.

Eastly for the Crown.

Talyarkhan with Kanuga for accused.

Sidney Clarence Aubrey Lyon

Examined on Oath :

Inspector C.I.D. I produce the sanction of the Government Ex. A. In consequence of this I applied to this Court for permission to investigate this case. It was given. I went to the Kamat Printing Press. I went to the Kamat Printing Press, Parekh Street and attached 6 copies of Reason of August 1933, 5 copies of August 1932 and 2 copies of September 1933 and one proof copy (page 1 to 25) of September 1933. (Put in as Ex. B C and D respectively) (Proof copy Ex-D-1). I made a Panchnama. I produce it Ex. E. I went to the office of the Association viz. to the Empire Automobile Building. I saw there Dr. Coelho. I asked him to produce copies of September 1933. He produced 16 copies. I produce them. (Ex. F). D. R. D. Wadia kept the accounts. The accused is the

Editor and publisher of the Magazine. I saw the membership book. I found these were about 262 members. The accused writes the editorial notes and the articles. Five hundred copies are printed monthly. It is circulated among members and libraries. I saw Kamat. He is the printer. He said that he used to receive the manuscript from Dr. D'Avoine and from Dr. Coelho. He had no correspondence. He used to get verbal orders. I complain of passages appearing at pages 3 and 7 of September 1933 (see Appendix on page Ed. Reason). Accused was warned by the Commissioner of Police in 1932. I am a Catholic but not a Roman Catholic. (Referred to pages 3 and 7). On reading these 2 articles I say that my religious feelings as a Catholic are outraged.

Cross-examination reserved.

Prabhakar Trimbak Karnik S A

Examined :--

Judicial clerk to the Chief Presidency Magistrate. I produce a declaration made by Charles Lionel D'Avoine as publisher of a monthly Magazine entitled 'Reason.' It was made on 27th June, 1932. (Ex. G).

No cross-examination.**Shankar Shridhar Kamat S A****Examined:—**

Proprietor of the Kamat Printing Press. I am the printer of 'Reason.' The issues Ex. B C D were printed at my press. Payments for printing are made by Dr. Coelho and D. R. D. Wadia. I send proofs sometimes to Dr. D'Avoine. I print 500 copies monthly.

No Cross-examination.

Eastly closes his case.

Charge under Section 295-A.

Charge explained to accused.

Accused pleads not guilty.

Mr. Talyarkhan wants time.

Case adjourned to 31-9-1934.

Sd. H. P. DASTUR.

18-1-1934.

10/W of 1934.

Sidney Clarence Aubrey Lyon Examined further:—(Shown Ex. C). At page 16 there appears a passage at the foot of the left hand column about which he was warned. (Eastley tenders the whole article. Kanuga objects P. C. Article to go in to prove the "intention" of the accused. Ex. C-1.)

Cross-examined:—This journal is the organ of the Rationalist Association of India. The objects of the Association are set forth on the back of the cover of the Magazine. I saw the articles at page 3 and 7 of Ex. D. in December last. The article starts with a reference to the rejection by the University Senate of a motion to encourage religious teaching. I don't complain of the first paragraph. I don't agree with it I noted different views. I don't complain of general observations as falling with the mischief aimed at by the section. My feelings were injured on reading the passage at

page 7. I belong to the Church of England. All Christians are Catholic. I am a Catholic. This is not a criticism but a mockery. I don't owe allegiance to the Pope. I don't know all the rituals prescribed by the Roman Catholic. It is a belief among the Roman Catholic not to eat meat on a Friday, but not among the Protestants. Mass is a term for a particular ritual they hold in the Roman Catholic Church, and not by the Protestants. I have attended a mass in the Roman Catholic Church. Anything about the Mussalmans will not hurt my religious feelings. The objectionable passage at page 3 applies to Roman Catholics. I don't acknowledge the Pope as our spiritual Head. From the time of Martin Luther we Protestants do not acknowledge the Pope as our spiritual Head. My religious feelings may or may not be insulted if any defamatory remarks are made against the Pope. It depends upon the remarks made. Defamatory remarks made against the Pope would be resented by him as remarks against a Catholic. I am not aware that a large body of Roman Catholic objected to the exposition of the Holy Coat. I am not aware that since 1844 a large body of Roman Catholics have been protesting against the exposition of the Holy Coat. (Kanuga refers to an article in the Encyclopædia entitled. "German Catholic" I am not aware of a strong body of Roman Catholics making a vigorous protest against the exposition of the Holy Coat (Read Hamsworth History of the World Vol. 1 2 P. 4893) I am not aware that a body of Roman Catholics view it as an . I don't know what is the mythology of the Holy Staircase. I don't know what a Holy Staircase is. I don't know what that story is. I can't say if the story would not meet with the

credence of a reasonable man. I was not present when the warning was given to the accused. I was not present at the interview with Sir Patrick Kelly.

Q. The accused says that his interview with Sir P. Kelly was only about the 3rd paragraph at page 17 in August 1932.

Ans. I am not prepared to contradict the accused if he says that it was with reference to this article.

My information about the warning is hearsay.

Re-examined : The paragraph at page 3 relates to Roman Catholics. It is offensive to me. In the Church of England there are 2 sects the High Church and the Low Church. Some very High Church Protestants don't eat meat on a Friday. As a Catholic both these articles outrage my religious feelings.

No Cross-examination of any other witness for the Prosecution.

Eastly closes his case.

Accused makes statement recorded separately.

Accused tenders written statement put in Ex. No. 1.

Kanuga calls no evidence.
Eastly addresses.

In the course of his address Mr. Eastly referred to certain paragraphs appearing in the other magazines to show the intention of the writer. Mr. Kanuga objected to his reading the paragraphs. Eastly says that when he put in the Magazines he distinctly told the Counsel and the Court that he put the other Magazines in to show the intention of the writer.

P. C. As the paragraphs were not put in separately and marked as Exhibits the accused would in my opinion be prejudiced. Eastly requests permission to

recall Lyon and put in the paragraphs so as to give an opportunity to the accused's Advocate to cross examine the witness.

P. C. Permission given.

Sydney Clarence Aubray Lyon Recalled and Examined : (Shown issue of August 1933). This is the 2nd paragraph at P. 2 in the right hand column commencing with the words. "It is remarkable that etc." (Ex. B-1 This is the last paragraph at Page 4 on the left hand column) This is the article "Malicious Propaganda" Ex. B-3).*

Cross-Examined by Kanuga :—I read Ex. B-3 in December last. I have read through the whole of the Magazine. Malicious propaganda refers to religion. The propaganda is against Free thinkers, the Rationalists as suggested by Monsignor D'Herbigny. There is undoubtedly a protest by the Rationalists of India against their being described as plotting against the Government. The reference to Jesus Christ at Page 5 offends my religion feelings. I object to the words "Audacious claim."

Q : Do you believe that whatever the Pope teaches must necessarily receive divine sanction.

A : I don't acknowledge the Pope as Spiritual Head. I am not prepared to support the claim. I would not protest against it. I would not accept it and therefore it follows I would reject it.

Q : Do you not consider it a bold claim.

A : It is a very difficult question to answer.

Q : Do you consider it a reasonable claim.

A : No.

Not being fully aware of the religious tenets of the Catholic I am not in a posi-

* See Article "Malicious Propaganda" Pages 4, 5, 6 & 7 of August 1933 in "Reason."

tion to express any opinion of it is "unreasonable".

The writer's view point appears to refer to the Roman Catholic Church at the same time the expression the Catholic Church is used. The Pope is not the Vicar of the Catholic Church as the word Catholic Church is understood by me. The first paragraph undoubtedly refer to Roman Catholics. In Ex. B-1 object to the last three lines commencing "from that moment etc. "Ex. B-2"* says would offend only the Khoja Sect

Act, believing in him. I don't challenge that the belief is held by that particular Khoja sect that he is the representative of God on earth. I am aware that his followers give him valuable offerings. I don't know what the fundamental points of belief are of that Khoja Sect.

Accused makes statement recorded separately.

Kanuga does not wish to call any evidence.

Case adjourned to 6-2-34.

Sd. H. P. Dastur,
31-1-34.

IN THE COURT OF THE CHIEF PRESIDENCY MAGISTRATE, BOMBAY.

Case No. 10/w of 1934.

King Emperor

vs.

C. L. D'Avoine.....Accused.

Written Statement of the Accused above-named.

1. I am 58 years of age and was born in the British Colony of Mauritius where French is spoken in a large section of the population. I received my medical education in France and Belgium and took the degree of M. D. in the latter country. I have been practising medicine in Bombay for the last 25 years or so, and am a registered medical practitioner. I was born in a Roman Catholic family and am married in another Roman Catholic family. I have amongst my patients a large number of Roman Catholics, and I am also the doctor attending many Catholic Nuns and the inmates of their convents in Bombay whenever my services are required and this has been so for the last about 20 years. Similarly I have friends who are Roman Catholic.

2. Although born and brought up as a Roman Catholic, my education and study of comparative religions have however

changed my views so as to have a scientific and rational outlook on life and I disapprove of all superstitious rites, ceremonies or beliefs. Even regarding scientific theories, I, like every rationalist, have an open mind and should change acceptance of a theory if later discoveries prove it to be erroneous.

3. I have been the local corresponding secretary of the Rationalist Press Association of London for about 25 years among whose members are noted men of science and philosophy of outstanding merit like Prof. Haldane, Prof. H. Laski, Leonard Huxley, Prof. Julian Huxley, Sir Arthur Keith, Sir P. Chalmers Mitchel, Dr. R. P. Paranjpe, Mr. Joseph McCabe, Prof. C. J. Pattee, The Earl of Russell, Lord Snell, Prof. Westermarck, Sir John Sumner, H. G. Wells and many others.

*See Para one before last in Notes and Happenings in Reason August 1933.

4. I have been for the last 30 years a consistent writer on Rationalism in Bombay, and my articles and contributions on the subject have often appeared in the Times of India, the Bombay Gazette and other English and Indian dailies of India.

5. I joined the Anti-Priestcraft Association (Rationalist Association of India since 1931) as soon as it was formed by a number of educated and influential men in Bombay in 1930, and have been one of its Vice-Presidents and Editor and publisher of "Reason", the organ of the Association whose avowed object is to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the people of this country.

6. I bear no malice against the Roman Catholic religion, nor against Islam or any other religion nor against the followers of any religion or sect. In writing the article 'Religion and Morality' my object was to make it clear that a rationalist stands for the best and the highest moral code and the best of hygienic principles, and that morality as such plays but a secondary part in the religious beliefs of the uneducated and uncultured classes, and that they attach more importance to unimportant spectacular practices and superstitious rites rather than serious ethical and moral consideration. As regards the paragraph appearing at page 3, the same refers to what are considered to be unhistoric superstitious practices and is a comment regarding such practices which have before now been adversely criticised and disapproved of by many Roman Catholics themselves. I have made the comment in good faith and without any deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of Roman Catholics here, or of insulting the religion or religious beliefs of the Roman Catholics.

7. From the official census figures for 1931, it appears that there are 6½ million

Christians of all sects in India including the Native States of which 1½ millions are in the Madras Presidency and 2 millions are in Travancore and Cochin. About 25% of the total Christians of India are literate. The magazine 'Reason' is published in English with a circulation of less than 500 amongst the educated classes who are in a position to do something, if they would, to reform the superstitious practices prevalent in this country, and whose views are likely to gradually influence the less educated classes, and it is needless to add that the magazine makes no appeal to nor expected to be read by the illiterate Catholics.

8. I make the same submission as in the preceding paragraph with regard to Moslems also and I may add that I have a large number of Moslems also amongst my patients and friends.

9. The statement of Inspector Lyon that I was warned by the Commissioner of Police is not correct. The true facts are that at an interview with Sir Patrick Kelly, the late Commissioner of Police in Bombay, my attention was drawn to a contributed article on God and Christ in which the expression "Sadhu" was used and as the meaning of Sadhu had been misunderstood by him, and I made it clear what the true meaning of the expression was and that he was satisfied and nothing further was said about it and it is incorrect to say that I was warned.

10. I deny that I have with deliberate and malicious intention outraged the religious feelings of any class of His Majesty's subjects by my writings, or insulted or attempted to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of any class. I am entirely innocent and pray that I may be acquitted.

Bombay,

31st January 1934.

In the Court of the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay.

Case No. 10/W of 1934.

King-Emperor *Complainant.*

Vs

C. L. D'Avoine *Accused.*

Charge:—Under Section 295-A I. P.
Code.

Accused pleads not guilty.

Judgment.

The accused is an M.D. of Belgium and the editor and a publisher of a magazine called "Reason". He is charged under section 295-A of the Indian Penal Code in respect of 2 writings published at pages 3 and 7 in the September issue of the magazine.

It is alleged that the two writings are calculated not only to hurt the feelings of all Catholics and of Muslims also as regards the 2nd writing, but that the accused by publishing them had a malicious and deliberate intention of outraging their religious feelings.

Section 295-A is a new Section and was introduced by the Criminal Law Amendment Act 25 of 1927 in consequence of the decision of the Lahore High Court in what is known as the Rangila Rasul case, in which it was held that section 153-A was not meant to stop polemics against a deceased religious leader however scurrilous and in bad taste such attacks may be. There is, however, a deliberate difference in the words used in section 295-A and in section 153-A.

Any criticism, and particularly a vigorous criticism, of any religious belief is bound to hurt or insult the religious feelings of the class of people professing that faith. It is also true that an intention of the writer is to be gathered from

the actual words used and the effect they may have on the minds of those to whom they are addressed, or against whom they are directed.

As, however, that would stifle all honest attempts to introduce social reforms, Legislature has not made a mere intent to insult the religious feelings of any class of His Majesty's subjects, penal under this section. It requires that that should be the deliberate intention of the writer and that such intention on his part be "malicious."

The principles which guide the Courts in judging of the intention of a writer in such cases as fall under the purview of sections 124/A or 153/A would not therefore apply to section 295/A. The word maliciously denotes a wicked, perverse and incorrigible disposition to do any act (Ward 4871) L.R.I.C.C.R.350. It means and implies to do an act which is wrongful and to the detriment of another. (23 Q.B.D. 598).

The words used and their true meaning are never more than mere evidence of intention. But that is not enough in a case under section 295-A. It is the deliberate intention of the writer that is the test, and not the effect it has upon others. A strong and scathing criticism of a religious belief or of a ritual must hurt the feelings of those that profess such belief but if the object of the writer is not to deliberately and maliciously outrage their religious feelings but to convert them to his views, however wrong they may be, it would not be an offence under section 295-A though it may fall perhaps under section 153-A. A vile, senseless and scurrilous attack

on a religion couched in extravagant language might be regarded as evidence justifying the Court in inferring that it was the deliberate intention of the writer to outrage the religious feelings of people professing that faith.

Then again the word "outrage" is stronger than the word "wounding." It implies "gross affront to abuse."

In all such cases, therefore, it is the duty of the prosecution to prove, and not merely to ask the Court to infer, that it was the deliberate object of the writer to outrage the religious feelings of the class of His Majesty's subject and that he did it perversely and without any lawful excuse.

The prosecution has examined only one witness viz. Inspector Lyon to depose to the meaning and effect of the articles complained of. He is neither a Mahomedan nor a Roman Catholic. He belongs to the Church of England but he says that all Christians are Catholics and as a Catholic his religious feelings were outraged.

Though it is not incumbent on the prosecution in such cases to examine persons belonging to the particular faith, which is attacked or ridiculed in the articles complained of, I think it would have been better to call and examine such persons in order to enable the Court to correctly appreciate their religious feelings and sentiments concerning certain rituals or observances.

The prosecution also relies on certain articles appearing in former issues of the Magazine to prove the intention of the writer. But in order to use the articles other than those complained of, for the purpose of inferring the intention of the writer, it is necessary to show who the writer was and that all

the articles produced were by the same hand. They must also appear to have been written about that time. Unless it be made to appear that there was a course of conduct or a definite scheme or some definite aim running through all such articles which led to the writing of the article complained of, the presumption of intention deducible from a writing much earlier in date is considerably weakened.

The prosecution has put in 3 articles Ex. B-1, B-2 and B-3 appearing in the issue of August 1933 and Ex. C-1 appearing in the issue of August 1932.*

I have already stated that under section 295-A the deliberate intention must appear from the article itself. Ex. C-1 would in my opinion fall under section 295-A. But there is no evidence that it is written by the accused. It is denied by the accused and the prosecution are not in a position to challenge his statement. It is written by some one under the nom-de-plume of "Embusque". It is a vile and scurrilous attack on Jesus Christ and written in very bad taste. This articles therefore must be eliminated.

As regards the articles B-1, B-2 and B-3, Inspector Lyon in his cross-examination had to admit that they were not of such a nature as would outrage his own religious feelings and I think no reasonable person on reading them could come to that conclusion.

But in view of the principles of law discussed by me above viz. that in cases under section 295-A the intention must be deliberate and must appear from the writing itself I do not think any useful purpose will be served by my dealing at great length the contents of these articles B-1, B-2 and B-3.

* See Article "Finding the Lord" By Embusque.

I now come to the writings complained of viz. Ex. D-2 and D-3. Ex. D-2 appears under "Notes and Happenings". At page 3 of the issue the accused has offered certain criticisms on what he regards as "superstitious beliefs" of the Roman Catholics. I have read the writing complained of over and over again and I am of opinion that it is absurd to impute to the writer a deliberate and malicious intention to outrage the religious feelings of the Roman Catholics.

The objects of the Association of which "Reason" is the official organ is given on the back cover of the Magazine. It is "to combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the masses of the country."

Such a magazine would necessarily attack some of the religious and social beliefs of all religions, and would to a certain extent necessarily wound the feelings of those that held such beliefs. The accused himself was born in a Roman Catholic family and is married into another Roman Catholic family. He has now changed his views and calls himself a "Rationalist". He is the Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association and as the editor of the Magazine he writes articles and contributions in the Magazine. He would naturally write articles attacking certain religious or social beliefs not with the deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of others but with a view to combat such beliefs and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the masses or to try and convert them to his own views.

If we bear this in mind the reason for

writing the articles Ex. D-2, and D-3 appear very clear.

In Ex. D-2 he says "The Holy Year is in full swing and every stunt calculated to raise the emotion and piety of the faithful is being done to make it a success". Except the word "stunt" I do not see anything objectionable in the whole of that sentence. It may or may not be true but there is nothing in it which could be regarded as a deliberate attempt on his part to outrage the religious feelings of the Catholics. The use of the word "stunt" is not dignified. "Stunt" means "turn of work, feat of skill, performance, turn at a music hall or other exhibition". It is an American colloquialism. The accused uses it because of what follows about the Holy Staircase. To an unbeliever like him it would be a "feat of skill". If he had used the word "effort" instead of "stunt" there would be absolutely nothing to take objection to. In order to judge of the intention of the writer one cannot pounce upon an objectionable word here and there and make it a pivot on which to hang the whole issue.

He wrote it because, as he says in the next paragraph "It makes one smile to think that in this enlightened age there are still millions of people who believe in these holy relics".

He then proceeds to state in Ex. D-2 that "during the last Lenten festivals, according to "Le Journal" of Paris, a perfect debauch of religiosity was witnessed in Rome". Objection is again taken to the word "debauch". Reading the context as a whole it means "extravagance" "intemperance" or "extravagant display". It is certainly an ill chosen word to use in connection with a religious belief. The accused uses it in conjunc-

tion with "religiosity" by which I presume he means "excessive religiousness". The sentence read as whole does not imply any "lewdness or immorality". He at once tells us what he means when he says that a "perfect debauch of religiosity" was witnessed in Rome.—The ascent of the Holy Staircase by the Pope on his knees and the adoration of the Holy Relics when he reached the top, was one of those impressive stunts which doubtless edified the superstitious Italians who always crave for these shows".

He again uses the word "stunt" and that is because the Italians "crave for these *shows*". It is not alleged that the "ascent of the Holy Stairs by the Pope on his knees" is a false or a malicious statement. Inspector Lyon knows nothing about it and he cannot say if it is a true statement of a fact. If it is true it may be described as a "feat" by a person holding accused's views about all religions and religious beliefs.

He then proceeds to say "The next stunt we are told will be exposition of the so called Holy Coat without seams which is preserved at the Cathedral of Treves at which it is expected that millions of spectators will be present".

Throughout the paragraph the idea running through the writer's head is that it is all a kind of show calculated "to raise the emotion and piety of the faithful". He therefore used the word "stunt" "spectators" "*Ascent*" of the Holy staircase on knees and *Adoration* of the Holy Relics and "*Exposition*" of the Holy Coat. To an unbeliever in these rituals they would appear as merely spectacular.

As to the Holy Coat there was a vigorous protest made in 1844 by a large number of Catholics themselves against its exposition and there appears an article

even in the Encyclopædia Britannica Vol. 11 and 12 to the effect that it was the cause of a large number of persons led by Johannes Rouge dissenting from the Holy Church. In Harnesworth's History of the World Vol. 12, p. 4893 a reference is also made to this under "Idolatrous Worship of the Sacred Relics". To protest therefore against the exposition of this Holy Relic cannot be construed as a deliberate attempt to outrage the feelings of the Catholic.

Ex. D-3 is an article occupying more than 2 pages of the Magazine. Out of it the prosecution only object to the passage occurring at page 7 which is as follows:—

"Some religions, Catholicism for instance, actually teach that devotion to ceremonial observances and orthodoxy are immeasurably superior to good works". Catholicism holds that moral offences are trifling matters compared with any deviation from the faith taught by the Church. The average Catholic would attach more importance to not eating meat on a Friday or not attending Mass on a Sunday than to moral obligations of a serious nature. We see this also with the average Mussalman who is very particular about washing his fingers and toes before saying his prayers, about assuming the correct posture and position while he would commit the most grievous offence the moment after he has said his prayers".

Whatever the witness, may say there is no doubt that almost the whole of the article refers to Roman Catholics and not to "Catholics" in general as the witness understands the word.

The accused is prompted to write the article with reference to the rejection by the Senate of the University of Bombay of a motion brought by Professor Gokhale

to encourage religious teaching in the Schools and Colleges under the control of the University. The writer congratulates the Senate for this action and he says that it would have been more useful to have proposed a comparative study of religions "which would free the mind from the narrow belief that only one's own religion is the true one".

According to the writer it is a fallacy to believe that only a knowledge of religion can impart moral ideas to man. He develops this theme and contends that with most religions it is a *sine qua non* that to obtain the full favour of gods it is necessary to belong to one particular religion in which one is born. Here one sees that morality as such plays but a secondary part in the ultimate destiny of the believer. And then follows the passage complained of.

In the whole of the articles there is nothing else to which prosecution take an objection. The accused may be wrong in stating the Catholic or the Mahomedan point of view. But it is his view that morality as such plays but a secondary part in the religious beliefs of the uneducated and uncultured classes. Most of the religious reformers also say that the followers of a particular religion have failed to realise the true message of their prophet or religion and that they attach great sanctity to rituals and ceremonies. The writer is probably wrong in saying that the average Catholic

would attach more importance to not eating meat on a Friday or not attending Mass on a Sunday than to moral obligations of a serious nature. But it is a matter of common observation that in almost all religious sects there will be found men who are very particular in the observance of certain rituals and ceremonies and yet who are guilty of grave moral delinquencies. The reference to the Catholics and the Muslims might be equally applicable to some men professing other religions as well.

In the next para. He says that it is now generally admitted that religion has lost its hold on the Westerners and probably the thoughtless in India do not realise that it is precisely the preposterous claims of religion and the little influence it has on morality that have drawn most intelligent and thoughtful people out of the Churches.

The article merely represents the writer's views on "Religion and Morality". I do not think that the articles falls within section 295--A.

I, therefore, acquit the accused.

Sd. H. P. Dastur,
6-2-34.

True copy.

H. P. Dastur.
Chief Presidency Magistrate,
Bombay.

Applied for on:—23-2-34

Ready on:—3-3-34

Delivered on:—5-3-34

PRESS COMMENTS.

RELIGION AND THE LAW.

Much comment has been engendered by the unsuccessful prosecution in Bombay of Dr. C. L. D'Avoine on a charge of outraging religious feelings. The case arose from two articles which appeared in *Reason*, the official organ of the Rationalist Association of India, of which Dr. D'Avoine is the editor and publisher. It is indeed surprising that anybody could have seriously believed in the application of section 295 A of the Indian Penal Code to the two articles. The principle underlying the section is simply this: that every man should be suffered to profess his own religion and that no man should be suffered to insult the religion of another. The necessity for such a law is obvious in any complex society; it is overwhelming in India. But the gravamen of the offence in this chapter of the Code lies in deliberate intention to insult the religion or wound the religious feelings of any class of persons. The law was from the first directed against deliberate insult, and not against mere controversy or criticism. Section 295 A had to be enacted because the decision of the Lahore High Court in a well-known case showed that no existing section of the Code covered malignant and scurrilous attacks upon the founder of a religion. It is not enough for somebody to come forward and complain that his religious feelings have been outraged by what somebody else said or did. If that were the law, social life would become impossible. The statute stresses the malignity of the

intent and motive, which must exclude all cases of free and frank discussion and honest criticism.

In the present case such malignity of purpose and deliberate offensiveness are wholly wanting. If the test were simply the possibility of outraging the religious feelings of a body of persons, all religious, social and intellectual progress would become impossible. It is satisfactory to find that the Chief Presidency Magistrate has taken a sane and robust view of the statute, and refuses to include within its purview mere intellectual argument and criticism, however distasteful it may be to certain people. The avowed object of the magazine in which the articles complained of appeared was to combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason, and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the masses. Such a motto by itself would outrage the susceptibilities of many orthodox denominations. If a prosecution of this sort were to succeed there would soon be an end to freedom of thought and speech so painfully wrested from the forces of bigotry and unreason. Rationalist opinion and activities are bound to offend orthodox sentiment in various quarters. But so would the open profession of every creed outrage the religious feelings of narrow bigots in every other creed. It is scarcely the province of secular law to concern itself with such controversies.

(*The Times of India*).

A JUST EXPOSITION.

We congratulate Dr. C. L. D'Avoine on his being acquitted of the charge of having deliberately and with malicious intention outraged the religious feelings of the Catholics and Muslims by insulting their religion. This foolish charge was brought against him for publishing two articles in "Reason", of which he is the Editor. The articles objected to, appeared in the issue of September 1933 and were not materially different from the numerous articles which had appeared before in that magazine, the official organ of the Rationalist Association, and which dispassionately but critically expose superstitious beliefs and plead for a rational outlook in all religious matters. The prosecution was frivolous but would have had grievous effect on the right of the press in discussing religious beliefs had not the Magistrate, Sir Hormuzdyar Dastur, taken a just and sensible view of the articles and their influence on the readers.

No Malicious Intention.

To convict Dr. D'Avoine under Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code, under which he was prosecuted, it was necessary to show not only the articles wounded the religious susceptibilities of any community but also that he had a deliberate and malicious intention to do so. But the trying Magistrate definitely stated that he had himself read the writing complained of over and over again and that he felt it absurd to impute to the writer a deliberate and malicious intention to outrage the religious feelings of any community. He further pointed out that Inspector Lyon, himself, on whose evidence alone the prosecution relied to prove the effect of the articles

on Catholics and Muslims, "had to admit that they were not of such a nature as would outrage his own religious feelings and think no reasonable person on reading them would come to that conclusion." The Magistrate believed, as most readers would, that the author wrote the articles because, in the author's own words, "it makes one smile to think that in this enlightened age there are still millions of people who believe in the Holy Relics."

A Service to Press.

We must congratulate the Magistrate, too, on the just and Rational view he took of the trend of the offending articles and the intention they disclosed. A few words here and there in an article might wound the susceptibilities of a few sensitive people. But the Magistrate rightly declared: "In order to judge of the intention of the writer one cannot pounce upon an objectionable word here and there and make it a pivot on which to hang the whole issue." The Magistrate has in short clearly and justly expounded the application of this new Section of the Penal Code, introduced in 1927 in consequence of the decision of the Lahore High Court in the "Rangila Rasul" case. He has thus done a service to the Press by vindicating its right to discuss religious beliefs in a dispassionate manner, even if such discussion should wound the susceptibilities of the oversensitive and the fanatical people. There is too much superstition and fanaticism in India and sound rationalist propaganda alone can remedy the evil. One of the good effects of the prosecution of Dr. D'Avoine is that it has attracted the sympathetic attention of thousands of thousands of Rationalists all over the

country. They will do well to organise themselves and combat superstition and bigotry by ceaseless rationalist propaganda.

Wanted Enquiry.

Few individuals have carried on such propaganda so consistently and boldly as Dr. D'Avoine who has rendered inestimable service to the cause of true progress in this country. His triumphant vindication by the Magistrate will, we have no doubt, stimulate him to more vigorous efforts in this direction. But the prosecution, which must have caused him no little annoyance, raises an important issue as to why it was launched at all. We have reason to believe that there has been in this matter some bungling in the Secretariat which has certainly not exactly covered itself with

glory by a sudden decision to sanction such a silly prosecution. We have, no doubt, that all citizens in Bombay, who give serious thought to questions which are being discussed in "Reason", were shocked to learn of Dr. D'Avoine's arrest and prosecution and were wondering whether they were living in the twentieth century or in the mediaeval ages in countries where the Inquisition flourished. Lord Brabourne, we trust, will make searching enquiry into the history of the D'Avoine Case and see that the person or persons responsible for bringing the discredit of an amazing and foolish decision on his Government are dealt with in such a manner as to ensure that a scandal of this kind is not repeated.

(The Bombay Chronicle).

HERESY HUNT IN BOMBAY.

The acquittal of Dr. D'Avoine by the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay, on the charge of "deliberately and maliciously" outraging the religious feelings of Catholics and Moslems, being a case of more than provincial and parochial importance, we make no apology to revert to it in order to discuss the serious issues it has raised. Dr. D'Avoine as editor of *Reason*, published certain articles which the police, who launched the prosecution contended, brought him within the mischief mentioned in section 295-A of the Indian Penal Code. The Magistrate, fortunately, took a reasonable and common sense view of the case and held that mere criticisms of superstitious beliefs and customs, though necessarily unwelcome to people who think they are

an indispensable part of their religion, did not necessarily mean that the accused's object was to insult the religious feelings of others and acquitted the accused.

A Bigot's Venedetta

Before coming to the wider aspects of the case, we may as well dispose of one peculiar feature in it, which must have brought home to the magistrate, the flippancy with which action had been taken by the prosecution. Before initiating proceedings in a court of law against the accused on such a serious charge, the police, one would have thought, would have satisfied themselves that the articles under reference had actually outraged the feelings of the class concerned, but wonder of wonders, when it came to the

production of witnesses to prove the case, the only one produced was Inspector Lyons, a police officer who was neither a Catholic nor a Moslem. If the Police had thought that, on such evidence, they would have secured the conviction of the accused, they must have extraordinary notions of the duties on the prosecution. The whole procedure smacks more of a bigot's vendetta than an endeavour to set the law in motion to prevent possible breaches of the peace.

A Great Landmark.

From the point of view of the liberty of the Press, freedom of opinion, social and religious progress. Sir H. P. Dastur's judgment must be held to be a great landmark. In a country of warring creeds and faiths, where a large section of the people is steeped in superstition, and pernicious customs thrive on the pretence of religious sanction, liberty of criticism not only of the creeds, beliefs and ceremonies of one's own religions, but of other religions as well, must be duly safe-guarded. Perverse attacks on other religion, intended more to annoy

and shock than to convince and convert, must no doubt be penalised, but to taboo reasoned argument and intellectual discussion will be to prevent reform and perpetuate superstition. Sir H. P. Dastur has stated that such criticism must necessarily imply some offence to the ignorant and the fanatical to whom religion is not so much a matter of faith as of observance of rites and customs, but cause of action under the section would not arise unless and until there was deliberate and malicious intention to wound the religious feelings of others. The test, hence, is the intention of the writer and not the tendency or the effect which his writings are likely to produce. If the prosecution had succeeded in its object, a staggering blow would have been delivered at freedom of opinion in discussing religious matters and obscurantists would have hailed it as a victory. The prosecution sought to make the King-Emperor not merely the "Defender of Faith" but also the "Protector of Superstitions" and we are glad that the attempt failed, as it deserved to fail.

(The Hindustan Times).

THE RATIONALIST VINDICATED

The Rationalist Association of India is not so widely known in this country as it should be. It has an official organ named 'Reason' Recently an article appeared in that paper from the pen of Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, a medical practitioner of Bombay, for which he was prosecuted. The charge against him was that he had in the course of his article deliberately and maliciously outraged the religious feelings of Roman Catholics and Muslims by attacking certain religious social beliefs, ritual and observances.

The writer considered these beliefs to be superstitious and advanced reason and argument for his contention. The Chief Presidency Magistrate of Bombay has acquitted him of the charge. The full text of the judgment is not before us but from a fairly good summary of it published in the Press we can gather the reasons he has given for the acquittal.

The judgment is of considerable importance though it says nothing new but reaffirms well-known legal principles

Nonetheless it is very timely and deserves the attention of everybody who is alarmed at the growing spirit of intolerance and bigotry along with the rising tide of communalism. Communalism prospers on political favouritism and feeds on fanaticism. And fanaticism is being encouraged in our country in manifold ways. We do not know if it is a reaction to nationalism of which we have had a spell during the last half a century. Political exigency has made not a few of the seekers of leadership, otherwise cultured, conform their conduct, outwardly at least, to the claims of the most rabid fanaticism. The example of the big has infected the small and we find to-day the ostentatious revival of customs and practices that the civilization and culture of a new century has discredited. But even more than this sudden access to religious zeal on the part of the elders of the generation the sinister movement towards poisoning of the minds of the young is a matter that should engage anxious attention of all those who are for progress and who nurse the hope that India would one day, not far off, take her place among the free and progressive nations of the world. The school educational system, particularly the curricula of the studies, which we have noticed in these columns from time to time, is being subjected to a process that is calculated to harden the young mind and make it run into channels of communal and sectarian isolation. It is appalling to think of the type of citizens that the process is bound to produce. It cannot but seriously affect intellectual progress. A mind spoonfed by dogmatic teachings, from which the spirit of search for truth is carefully divested, cannot produce leaders in the domain of science, art or literature. The process is making for

intellectual stagnation and spiritual bankruptcy.

The case under notice illustrates the length to which intolerance of honest views honestly expressed has gone among certain people. The case must have been instituted at the instance of persons either of the Roman Catholic or Islamic persuasion who fancied that their religious feelings had been outraged. If the Government instituted to the case of its own motion so much the worse for it. The prosecution itself was half-hearted for only one witness had been examined by it, namely, Inspector Lyons who, the Magistrate observed, was neither a Muslim nor a Roman Catholic but who belonged to the Church of England. This witness, however, said that all Christians are Catholics and as a Catholic his feelings had been outraged.

The Magistrate has, in his judgment, made a distinction between the case before him and the notorious Rangila Rasul Case wherein it was held that Section 153A was not meant to stop religious polemics, however scurrilous and in bad taste they might be. In the Rangila Rasul Case the Lahore High Court held that the writer had the deliberate and malicious intention of insulting or wounding the religious feelings of a class of his Majesty's subject. But in the case before him the Magistrate held that the intention of the writer was not malicious. The word "malicious," the Magistrate observed, denoted wicked, perverse, and an incorrigible disposition to do any act. It was the deliberate intention of the writer, he said, that was the test and not the effect it had upon others. Otherwise, proceeds the Magistrate, no social reform would be possible. The intention of the writer was to be gathered from the actual

words used. Did he intend merely to wound the religious feelings of a class of people or was his object the combating of what he considered to be social abuses or superstition? One could wound the religious feelings of any class of people by pretending to combat what he considered to be superstitious practices or beliefs. The Magistrate remarks that it was a matter of common observation that in almost all religious sects there would be found men who were very particular in the observance of certain rituals and ceremonies and yet who are guilty of great moral delinquency. The writer of the article complained of, had congratulated the Senate of the Bombay University for its rejection of the motion to encourage religious teachings in the schools and colleges for according to him religious teachings generally speaking,

has degenerated into the observance of rituals and ceremonies. The Magistrate finds nothing wrong in these views of the writer and considers that his article was quite consistent with the object of the Rationalist Association which was "to combat all religious and social beliefs that could not stand the test of reason". To do this, observes the Magistrate, some religious beliefs of some religious would have to be attacked and that would to a certain extent necessarily wound the feelings of those who held such beliefs.

Communalism must flourish if religious fanaticism is encouraged. For the moment it seems fanaticism is getting on quite prosperously encouraged and protected by many quarters, some the least expected.

(Amrit Bazaar Patrika).

A TRIUMPH OF REASON.

There is a stage probably in the development of every community when giving expression to an opinion not generally held by a majority of the members is considered to be a very dangerous crime and is punished severely. Moreover, the punishment is quite out of proportion in many cases to the gravity of the "crime" and irrespective of whether a breach of peace is threatened or not. The persecution of the heliocentrists, the Christians, the Reformers, the Jews, the Birth-Controllers, the Pacifists, the Heterodox and even the political opponents are all different manifestations of the same general fear of anything different from the general run of thought.

It is the general belief, that we in the 20th century have now got over that

phase of barbarism and that nobody is punished for an expression of mere opinion, so long as no incitement to any action against the laws of the country is involved. How wrong this belief is, is shown by various instances of prosecutions under the so-called blasphemy and obscenity laws, launched by governments in practically all countries. Even in England, supposed to be one of the most tolerant of countries, these laws still continue to be on the statute book, a menace to the free expression of opinion. In India there was no blasphemy law until recently and were it not for the deliberate policy of the Indian Government to placate the orthodox sections of the different communities, the law might not have been passed. The desire to

gain friends among the Indian public men, of whatever sort, resulted in placing upon the statute book a law which declared as a crime the attacking of any religion with malicious intention to wound the feelings of its followers.

The first prosecution under the law in the Bombay Presidency was launched recently against that well-known rationalist writer, Dr. D'Avoine, the Editor of *Reason*, the organ of the Rationalist Association of India, Bombay. The articles objected to were published in the December issue of the magazine and one of them contained an attack on the proposed resolution in the Senate of the Bombay University for the introduction of compulsory religious instruction in the Colleges. Fortunately the learned Chief Presidency Magistrate of Bombay took the correct view of the matter and acquitted Dr. D'Avoine. The acquittal was based on the absence of any malicious and deliberate intention on the part of the accused to wound the religious feelings of the communities concerned. If this sane and eminently reasonable view is not taken, any criticism of the beliefs and superstitions of a community would be impossible. In fact, reformers will be so handicapped that no agitation against the age-old customs would at all be possible. Even Mahatma Gandhi's

anti-untouchability movement must then be banned, for, surely, it is by now quite evident that the religious feelings of the orthodox Sanatanists are being wounded every day.

Nobody apparently is concerned about the feelings of Rationalists. There is nowhere a law to protect *their* susceptibilities and inner convictions. If the law were to be entirely impartial, the religiously minded should also have been prohibited from attacking, say, atheists like the present writer. That is however not the case and any religious writer can attack a rationalist in any way he likes. Of course, I do not object to it so long as the same freedom is granted to me. If, in future, the blasphemy law is to be administered with the same liberal spirit as the Chief Presidency Magistrate showed, it will have been rendered much less objectionable.

With the general spirit of intolerance rampant in the world, with Hitlers, Mussolinis and Stalins threatening everybody who dares utter a single word against the established creed of the men in power, it is indeed a gratifying sign that in India, of all countries, an honest and straightforward criticism of irrational religious beliefs is not considered a crime.

(*The Servant of India*).

THE D'AVOINE CASE.

Dr. D'Avoine is a medical man in Bombay who is a rationalist and who edits a journal called *Reason* which is the mouthpiece of the Rationalist Association of India. The journal exposes superstitions and has to criticise, by its very nature, religious beliefs. And the freedom thus to examine and criticise

beliefs is one of the privileges of a civilised life. But there may be over-sensitive people whose feelings are easily wounded, and the police recently prosecuted Dr. D'Avoine for having published some matter that came, according to the police, under criminal law, incorporated into our Statute, soon after

the well known Rangila Rassool case. Dr. D'Avoine is a respectable gentleman and the readers of his journal are educated people. His prosecution was a surprise even to orthodox people. The Chief Presidency Magistrate, however, after listening to the evidence brought before him by the police, has discharged the doctor and in his learned judgment his worship has clearly laid down that in order that the particular section of the Penal Law may apply in such cases, the malicious intention of the accused must be proved, and the accused could not be convicted merely on the ground that religious feelings of some people were wounded. And all comments made in the press on his worship's interpretation of the section, express the opinion that his worship gave the only interpretation possible. If the interpretation were otherwise, there would be no liberty of expression. In fact, the tendency in this country to magnify religious issues

into a size far beyond them, must be curbed in time. In such depressing circumstances, the decision of the chief presidency magistrate in the D'Avoine case comes as a refreshing breeze. On the ground of amazing notions of religious feelings being wounded, riots have occurred outside and inside theatres, cinema films have been stopped, requests are made to universities to withdraw famous books of eminent authors. Day by day we are getting into a stifling atmosphere. A tremendous effort is necessary to teach people that feelings must be ruled by reason, and that is one of the serious tasks with which law-makers are entrusted. Dr. D'Avoine had to undergo an amount of unnecessary mortification, but the judgment his case has elicited is a document of great importance and it vindicates the liberty of expression to some extent.

*Bombay correspondent of the Leader
on February 25th, 1934.*

NO INTOLERANCE.

The first recollection that comes to the mind after reading the judgment of the Chief Presidency Magistrate in what is known as the "Reason" case, is, who initiated and who sanctioned such a foolish prosecution. The Section under which the charges were framed was added quite recently to the Penal Code, with a view to preventing or punishing the publication of writings deliberately and maliciously intended to insult and wound the feelings of persons holding particular religious beliefs.

It may be desirable to have some special law to deal with writings of a purely mischievous character, which

are calculated unnecessarily to wound people's feelings and, potentially, to create breaches of the peace. And "perse" we have no particular quarrel with the Section. But it is obvious that a definite and distinct line must be drawn between such writings and the expression of views which anybody is entitled to hold and publish as long as they are expressed in reasonable and moderate language which is not written with the merely mischievous intention of wantonly wounding the feelings of others.

Clear Judgment.

The Magistrate made this very clear in his judgment and we confess to a

feeling of relief that the case came within the purview of one who was able to apply a calm and judicial mind to the scrutiny of the impugned writings and judge them from the point of view of reason and toleration and the natural right of mankind to hold what views are acceptable to his own reason and freely publish them ; for there is a grave danger in a case of this kind, if it happened to be heard by a judge or magistrate whose mind is naturally prejudiced against persons who speak or write against religion. Past experience and especially the long battle which was fought in the Courts for the freedom of the Press in England has taught us that the application of prohibitive laws of this kind is not always safe in the hands of judges, who, themselves, hold strong religious views.

We hope, however, that the failure of this case will teach a lesson, not only to the Government of Bombay but to Secretariats throughout the country, that this section of the law was never intended to stifle the expression of reasonable views and public argument on religion and that the machinery of the law does not exist to subserve intolerance.

No Excuse.

There was no excuse for launching this prosecution. It is not short of monstrous that the law should have been set in motion to gratify, apparently, religious bigots, who, themselves, indulge very freely in the language of sheer intolerance and abuse when writing and speaking of those who are not prepared to

accept their religion or to have religion kept in a glass case. "I have read the writing complained of over and over again and I am of opinion that it is absurd to impute to the writer a deliberate and malicious intention to outrage the religious feelings of the Roman Catholics" said the Chief Presidency Magistrate and we cannot imagine any reasonable man coming to a different conclusion.

Dr. D'Avoine is a man of great intellectual culture, who has formed certain views in regard to the religion in which he was brought up, and, obnoxious though they may be to the orthodox and people who are more fanatical about superstitious beliefs than the ethics of religion, he is as fully entitled to ventilate them in the plainest language as any priest is to consign unbelievers to hell everlasting, which is his own cheerful contribution to tolerant discussion when we come down to "brass tacks." The views for the expression of which Dr. D'Avoine was indicated might have been worded in much stronger language than they were without coming within the prohibitive terms of the section. The passages, particularly indicated by the prosecution as objectionable, merely ventilated opinions which, on the one hand, occur quite commonly in the admonitions of Muslim preachers and, on the other, are held by many devout Catholics, who do not regard their religion as a static affair which is bound to cling to every sort of superstition which became attached to it in

ages of less enlightenment than that in which they have the good fortune to live.

Never Again !

Had this prosecution succeeded a new and a very grave menace to the freedom of thought and writing would have been created in this country, where in the midst of so many warring creeds and such a wealth of superstition of one kind or another there is special need for mutual toleration, not only between the followers of one faith and another, but for the free and reasonable expression of the views of those whose intellectual reasoning does not permit them to accept superstitious beliefs. Obscene and outrageous writing are to

be condemned and should be penalised, but to attempt to bring intellectual argument within that category is ridiculous and disgraceful and it is to be hoped that the official power to institute a prosecution of this kind will never be used again with such complete lack of justification.

(*The Sentinel*)

Condemnatory articles against the Prosecution also appeared in the *Pragasha of Goa*, *The Bombay Sentinel*, *The Free Press Journal*, *The Hitavada*, *The Maharatta*, *The Sanj Vartman*, *The Praja Mitra*, *The Hindu*, *The London Free Thinker* & *The Bombay Samachar*.

THE USUAL ANSWERS.

Anyone who is enterprising enough to discuss the topic of religion with his fellow-beings is sure to be rewarded. The reward will seldom take the form of bouquets or compliments. As often as not it will be accompanied by open disapproval, which sometimes may develop into vilification, abuse or even slander. Whether the risk of such consequences is worth while must be left to the judgment of the individual. But whatever the consequences may be, the clash of opinion which results from religious discussion cannot but sharpen one's powers of reasoning and give one a fresh insight into human mentality. It will never add to one's respect for the effects of religious

teaching upon human character or intellect.

One peculiar result of such discussions is to emphasize the sameness of the answers given to arguments against the existence of God and the supernatural. The particular wording of these answers will, of course, vary in many instances. But, shorn of their distinctive trimmings, we are left with about half-a-dozen at most. Let us, therefore, examine a few of those which are most commonly encountered.

(1) "Look at the beauties and wonders of nature ! There must be *something* behind it all."

This, of course, is what the high-brows call "The Argument from Design," converted into popular phraseology. But to anyone whose mind has matured beyond the age of ten years, the extraordinary childishness of this argument must be crystal clear. Yet it is surprising how many apparently intelligent people still make use of it.

The first point to note is this. Because there are beauties and wonders in nature, we are expected to agree that the "something behind" it is also beautiful and wonderful. The next point to note is that we are expected to give this "something behind" the name of "God." And lastly we are expected to respect, nay, even to worship, this "something behind" or else to lie under the suspicion of being cranks or criminals if we fail to do so.

When we point out that diseases, deformities, accidents, famines, plagues, cataclysms and all the other horrors of nature are as much a part of the whole as its beauties and wonders, we are met either with disgruntled silence or else with some counter-statement as unintelligent as the original one.

Now if "God" is the only "something behind" nature, then it is clear that he must be behind its unpleasant features as well as its pleasant. In this case why should the Atheist be condemned for refusing to respect, much less worship, such a thing? On the other hand, if "God" is not the only "something behind" the horrors of nature, then there must be something else—perhaps even several other "somethings." And, by all the evidence of nature itself, this "something else"—or these several other "somethings"—must be fully equal in power to "God." For they carry out their horrible work with as much impunity and with as obvious

results as "God." So it would appear that, with at least two such powers behind nature, it is a trifle inconsistent to lavish all respect upon one alone. Possibly if a little less time were spent in adulation of "God," and a little more in flattery and propitiation of the "something else," the effect upon nature as a whole might be more agreeable to us humans. Unfortunately it is only so-called "savages" who are consistent in this respect, and who devote their religious attention to both sorts of "something behind."

The trouble is that all God-believers are shocked at the suggestion that anything else can be equal in power to their special divinity. Indeed they assert that he is not merely the creator of all nature, and therefore "behind" all its aspects, but they assert further that he is all-good and all-powerful. And this results in such odd remarks as that the unpleasant events in nature are "God's ways of reminding us of his existence"! Or, alternatively, that "God has given the Devil (which is their name for the "something else") a temporary power in the world."

If either of these statements be true, then it is a rank impossibility to make God's omnipotence tally with his all-goodness; unless, of course, language is nonsense and words can mean two different things at the same time. The "beautiful" design of God's creation begins to look decidedly messy! His omnipotence becomes impotence; and his all-goodness takes on a muddy shade of part-badness. What, for instance, would one think of an all-powerful friend who reminded us of his existence by dashing our heads with a rock, or by sticking germ-infested pins into us! Or even of one who did not do this himself, but

allowed one of his servants to do the same sort of thing.

The God-believer's reply to this is always the same. "God's ways are mysterious!" Oh, how they do love that word "mystery," these muddle-pated worshippers of ignorance. Any absurdity, any contradiction, any futility in argument or fact is swallowed as the gilded pill of "mystery" if it relates to that vague "something behind" which they call "God." In no other sphere of thought except religion is such nonsense tolerated for a moment.

To the Atheist there is nothing mysterious about a raging toothache, a twisted spine, or a landslide that overwhelms a whole village of 489 inhabitants, men, women, children and babes alike. (This occurred at Goldan in Switzerland in 1806.) Nor is there anything mysterious in the fact that certain aspects of nature are considered to be beautiful or wonderful. Nor that what may be beautiful, or fortunate, for some persons can be ugly, or unlucky, for others. For the Atheist realizes that beauty and ugliness, good and evil, are merely relative terms which vary according to circumstances; and that "God," and "the Devil" are fictions of the human brain inherited from a dim past when men knew less about the causes of certain phenomena than they know now.

What is strange, however, is that persons who profess to be intelligent and are, in fact, intelligent in other spheres of thought, should abandon their intelligence when they come to apply their reasoning to beliefs which they have been forced to swallow "at their mother's knee." Yet, when we realize that this "God" idea is just the very one which is acquired at an age when most people are too young to

do anything but believe what they are told, then even this strange behaviour begins to be understandable. For it is well-known that the most difficult thing in the world is to rid oneself of prejudices and habits of thought instilled during childhood.

Unfortunately these antique superstitions and oldwives' tales about gods, devils, angels and other imaginary creatures, are not limited in their effects to the individual. It is, indeed, bad enough that they warp the intelligence of children to such an extent as to affect their adult judgment in later years. But when it is realized that these beliefs are tied up to moral standards that are pitifully out of date, the cumulative effect upon the society which accepts them is tragic. Furthermore, when we begin to notice that behind all this irrational thinking and twisted morality there flourishes a vast army of parasites, whose aim is to advertise and perpetuate these absurdities for their own benefit, it behoves all who have come to their senses to do their utmost to expose this rotten hoax upon humanity. For as long as it profits priests, parsons and pastors to batten upon the lies which they so sedulously preach, so long will humanity suffer under the triple curse of ignorance, credulity and bigotry.

No one denies that there may be a few uneducated ministers of religion who are sincere in their belief that without these supernatural fantasies morality would go to the dogs. But their fears are quite unfounded and utterly contradicted by experience. No one denies that there are ministers of religion who genuinely wish to improve the morality of their flocks. But the Atheist firmly denies that any consistent standard of morality can be based upon beliefs that are inconsistent

and self-contradictory; and he asserts that in any case morality has nothing to do with the so-called "supernatural." Moreover, he declares, with the evidence of all history to back him, that it is positively immoral to preach as truth what has not been and cannot be proved true.

"Look at the beauties and wonders of nature!" Yes, look and take your fill. But why remain blind to its horrors and evils? What is rugged grandeur to the tourist is a horrible eyesore to the local inhabitant. A wonderful view to some is a mere monotony to others. A feast to the locust is a plague to the farmer. A painful death to one creature is a victory or a pleasant meal for another. And so on through the whole gamut of nature which, apart from human judgment, is morally and æsthetically neutral.

"There must be something behind it all." Yes, of course, there is—if by "something" we mean some cause or causes. And the "something behind" all these relative aspects of nature is nothing more nor less than our common-or-garden human preferences and dislikes. These, in their turn, differ in each individual according to his inherited and acquired characteristics; and they vary according to the circumstances of time and place. If these be "God," then "God" is human.

(2) "But we must believe in something!" Or, alternatively, "We must believe in something *higher* than ourselves."

Here again, be it noted, we are expected to give that something the name of "God." But what this answer really amounts to is this: that the speaker, having jettisoned nine-tenths of his religious beliefs, still imagines it to be his duty to cling to the remaining one-tenth. In

some cases he has thrown overboard his belief in miracles or the virgin birth of Jesus. In other cases he has ceased to believe in the resurrection or the use of prayer. But to whatever degree his unbelief may have reached, he refuses, for reasons usually unknown to himself, to scrap his belief in the one thing which is the sum of all the absurdities he has already discarded.

How can this inconsistency be accounted for? Does the man really feel convinced about the existence of this "God"—this grand old phantom of all superstitions and myths? After having removed every contradiction, every illogicality, every lie from his religious philosophy, does he really think that the vague supernatural residue contains any truth in it? What reasons, if any, has he for the somewhat fatuous assertion, "We must believe in something."

Like so many religious slogans, this one may mean almost anything or nothing. The background and context of it have to be analysed before any sort of sense can be extracted from it. And the background in most cases is sheer ignorance or thoughtlessness. The obvious contradictions and impossibilities of religious belief are easily, and even contemptuously, swept aside, because they clash too forcibly with the facts of experience. But the less obvious are left to float undisturbed in a fog of indifference. They have no practical application and are therefore ignored. And, except upon special occasions, they are never brought out into the arena of discussion. Hence their persistence and their immunity from the criticism of logical thought. Hence the "something" which is anything or nothing.

It is the context in which this slogan makes its appearance that determines the special purpose of its use. The "wicked Atheist" story, so persistently broadcast by priest and parson, creates an atmosphere of distaste or fear among ordinary folk, such that the great majority of them will hastily dissociate themselves from any suspicion of total disbelief. That is one reason why so many declare they *must* believe in *something*.

Then again, there is the "loyal and royal" sentiment which, in the opinion of the upper circles and those who ape them, has to be maintained at all costs—despite the snobbery and servility which are their inevitable accompaniment. The aristocracy are said to be "higher" than we are; the King and all the Royal Family are "higher" than the aristocracy; and so on till we arrive at the biggest, most aristocratic, most royal Boss of all, namely, "God." To cast aspersions upon this purely imaginary acme of loftiness would be equivalent, or almost equivalent, to a profession of Communism or Bolshevism or some equally ghastly political creed. And that would *never* do! All of which give a reason why so many declare that they must believe in something *higher* than themselves. The fact that they have not one atom of verifiable evidence in proof of the existence of this elusive "something" does not, of course, matter in the least. They *must* believe because they simply *dare not* do otherwise.

A third context is that in which the self-importance of the speaker is at stake. Whatever other arguments may be adduced for the possibility of a life after death, undoubtedly the strongest is that which says: "If I am not immortal, then the rest of creation isn't worth a sneeze." This argument is seldom consciously

admitted and, of course, never perhaps in the form just given. But it can easily be inferred from the attitude of the speaker, as well as from the other arguments he favours. And since the evidences for a "future" life are nil, or else hopelessly entangled in humbug, the speaker usually prefers to avoid entering upon a discussion of this particular theory and takes shelter behind the vaguer, and therefore safer, belief in "something." That this "something" is nothing more and nothing less than his own almighty importance in the scheme of things makes it all the more essential that he should withdraw it from the light of logic, and camouflage it under the conveniently vaporous term "God."

Taken at its face value, this slogan is merely a childish platitude. "We must believe in *something*!" Well, of course we must. We must believe in the evidence of our senses, combined with every possible means of verification at our command. Admittedly the evidence of our senses is not always completely reliable. But, if we were to act upon the opposite theory, namely, that such evidence is never to be believed, then we would be entirely deprived of any reason for belief in anything. We must begin somewhere—and that "somewhere" is the data which we call sense-impressions, or experience. But even so, it should be emphasized that our beliefs are never absolute unless absolute proof of their truth is forthcoming. In other words, we must believe in everything that is capable of being proved true. And we must not believe in anything the truth of which is doubtful. In such cases our belief should vary in certainty in proportion as it is possible to prove the truth of the evidence which supports it.

Thus I believe as an absolute truth that two and two make four. Why? Because if any exception, to this truth were admitted, then mathematics would be guesswork and language would be all nonsense. I also believe as an absolute truth that there is no life after death. Why? Because if "death" means the cessation, or the end, of "life," then "life after death" is a flat contradiction in terms, or language is all nonsense. I also believe that Napoleon was a man who lived upon this earth at one time. In this case my belief is not quite absolute because my evidence is not quite absolute. But it is near enough to being so for most practical purposes. Nevertheless I would not discard evidence to the contrary as impossible. Lastly I do not believe that Jesus, as portrayed in the Bible, was a man who lived on this earth. Here again my belief is open to modification, though whether such a person did or did not live in reality is a matter of as much indifference to me as whether Napoleon really lived or not. As a problem of evidence both questions interest me. As a matter of history I find my belief in the one stronger than the other solely on account of the evidence. As a matter of fact neither concerns me at all.

So much for *belief*. As for believing in "something higher" than ourselves, the foregoing remarks apply with equal force. When I stand under a tree, I believe in something higher than myself—the tree. The religious person will object to this seeming flippancy. By "higher" he says that he means greater, more sublime, more marvellous, more all-embracing—and so on through a long list of terms which are usually even vaguer than the word "higher." When we ask for explanations or concrete illustrations of what

each of these terms means, we are brought face to face with a fog of loose thinking, which it is not easy to penetrate.

Grant that I believe in London, or Mr. Oliver Hardy, as being "greater" than Cambridge, or myself, respectively. Grant that I believe in kindness, or a beautiful sunset, as being more "sublime" than cruelty, or an east-end slum, respectively. Grant that I believe in England, or a gushing hostess, as being more "all-embracing" than Sussex, or a mysogyst, respectively. Grant that I believe all these things on the evidence of my senses as verified by the corroborative witness of others, where does that elusive entity "God" come in? The religious person would have me exaggerate, in imagination, all these comparative terms, until my imagination is incapable of exaggerating them any further. And when the bursting point has been reached, that is "God"!

This, as an effort of the imagination, is, of course, very entertaining to some persons, though a trifle idiotic to others. But at best it is no more than an effort of the imagination. It proves nothing. For the imagination can just as easily exaggerate such terms in an opposite sense, and can invent a "something" bursting with infinite lowness, smallness, meanness, cruelty, ignorance and so fourth. And we are once again up against the competition between the two imaginary "powers" which I referred to in my previous article, together with all the illogicalities and inconsistencies which such a theory contains.

The difficulty which the Atheist encounters, with people who give such answers as the one that has been discussed, is that these answers are a clear indication of the absence of thought. And

it is remarkable to note that this absence of thought is the unfailing companion of credulity—the readiness to believe in the existence or truth of anything without bothering to verify the evidence. Yet even though discussion may not convince the God-believer of the purely imaginary nature of his mental idol, the Atheist can rest happy in the knowledge that the seed of criticism and commonsense almost invariably bears some good fruit. Unless a person is mentally defective, or a conscious self-deceiver, Truth is bound to oust his

false beliefs in the long run. And for this reason even the most inconclusive discussion of religious subjects should not deter the enterprising Atheist from trying again when the opportunity presents itself.

"We must believe in something." Why, certainly ! But, in the name of common-sense, don't let us believe in anything just because we were told to do so when we were babies. Let us insist on some verifiable proof of its existence and reality first.

C. S. FRASER.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

A student of the St. Xavier's College, Bombay, has sent us the magazine of that college for February last with a request for comments on the passages "Science and Divines" which appear on pages 108 and 109 of that magazine. The writer of those notes takes Prof. M. N. Saha seriously to task for saying, at the recent session of the Congress of Science held in Bombay, that "The Darwinian Theory of Evolution had knocked the bottom out of the Biblical Myth about the Origin of Man". He calls this a trespass into the ground of Religion. Why a trespass? Why should the Biblical account of the Creation of Man be considered a religious question which Science has no right to assail. Either that account is the true manner in which man came into existence or it is not. Science considers it is not, and a Scientist has a perfect right to explain how erroneous is that account in the light of the science of biology. It amazes one to learn that the writer of those notes considers this, not only a trespass, but

an "extra Scientific Statement". The inference is that priests must not be contradicted when they teach erroneous theories about the origin of man or the Universe. By what right do they make these subjects their own province? Are they afraid that scientists, who enlighten people on these questions, are doing them real harm by showing on what erroneous ideas their religion has been founded?

* * *

Prof. Saha also spoke on Astronomy, of which he is a great authority. He naturally referred to the vast strides the study of that science has achieved and showed how, compared with this, the idea of creation as depicted in the Bible was childish and utterly erroneous. This is also considered to be an extra scientific statement, which that writer thinks Prof. Saha had no right to make ! After this it is hard to convince us that priests are not afraid of the scientific light which is thrown on questions that they exploit, and it is, indeed, comical to hear them assure us that "True Religion has little

to fear from true Science." Those notes try to convey the impression that since many priests are well acquainted with science, for instance, L'Abbe' Lemaitre of the Louvain University of Belgium, who is a recognized eminent astronomer like Jeans and Eddington, and since his scientific knowledge does not disturb his religion and that of other "Scientific" priests, that writer does not consider that religion is incompatible with science. Prof. Saha is represented as being rash in making such statements. We quite agree that, from a priestly point of view, such statements which show the myths of the Bible are very undesirable and rash.

* * *

It is amusing to learn that Roman Catholic priests have no fear of the inroads science has made on their cherished beliefs. The assurance that all is well with their religion is, of course, pure bunk on their part. The fundamental dogmas of their creed are based on the accuracy of some of these Biblical accounts. We showed this in our article on the Myth of Creation in our last month number. Small wonder, that the Church 300 years ago, realizing the true import of the then new Copernician doctrine of the solar system, condemned such teaching and persecuted those who taught the same. Bruno was burnt at the stake for teaching the heliocentric doctrine, though today they try to make believe that he was then murdered for other theological reasons. Galileo, at any rate, was imprisoned for this offence and Copernicus, himself, was obliged to keep away from Papal influence to escape a similar fate. At that time, the Church was candid enough to admit that the heliocentric doctrine was contrary to the Scriptures and damaging to the

Catholic faith. In exercise of its right to determine what true science is, the Church, in the Pontificate of Paul V, stepped in and, by the mouth of the Holy Congregation of the Index, delivered, on the 5th of March 1616, the following decree:—

"And whereas it hath also come to the knowledge of the Said Holy Congregation that the false Pythagorean doctrine of the mobility of the earth and the immobility of the sun, entirely opposed to Holy Writ, which is taught by Nicolas Copernicus is now published abroad and received by many. In order that this opinion may not further spread, to the damage of Catholic truth, it is ordered that this and all other books teaching the like doctrine be suspended, and by this decree they are all respectively suspended, forbidden, and condemned."

* * *

After this it leaves us cold what scientific truths the Church chooses to accept or reject. It leaves us colder still when we are assured that priests, like L'Abbe' Lemaitre, feel no misgivings about their religion in the light of modern knowledge. Father LeMaitre, of course, is a mathematician. He has no authority to speak on the science of Biology which treats of the origin of man. As regards his equanimity about modern Astronomy not being in conflict with the Mosaiical Cosmogony on which his religion is founded, he does not enlighten us how he harmonizes this with modern knowledge. His mind must have several watertight compartments, like many others who are so complacent about their belief. While modern knowledge finds room in one, absurd myths and legends are lodged in others and they are not allowed to clash. The fact is that many priests, who have

committed themselves by a vow when quite young to defend an untenable creed, are obliged to resort to all sort of intellectual jugglery to do this. One can only pity them and also rejoice that in these days many sincere and upright thinkers consider this as pure intellectual dishonesty. Dr. Barnes, the Anglican Bishop, admits that these Biblical myths have been exploded by Science, yet he thinks he can still call himself a Christian!

* * *

On the 19th of this month will be celebrated the centenary of Kursondas Muljee who was a bold social reformer and a fearless freethinker. He mercilessly exposed all the gross abuses and scandal that were current in the religious world of a certain Hindu community in Bombay. As was to be expected, this led him into serious legal

trouble. He was prosecuted before the Bombay High Court in 1861 and was honourably acquitted. In a very interesting article published in some Bombay dailies, Mr. Lakmidas Rowjee Tairsee, quite recently, gave a brief account of the life and work of that remarkable man. What strikes one most was his fearlessness to attack those powerful Maharajs who were the cause of those scandals. With the exception of a few right minded persons in his community, he had every body against him; but he did not flinch in his task and in the end he was rewarded by the reforms that his attacks introduced. India is such a country that any one who decries against priestcraft is always looked upon as a bad man; but Kursondas quite bravely defied all this and won in the end.

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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The annual general meeting of the Association was held at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay on Tuesday the 6th March at 7-30 p. m. The following were present:—

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh, Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, Mr. D. R. D. Wadia, Dr. G. Coelho, R. D. Karve, Mr. M. R. P. Masani, P. Trienmdas, Dr. S. B. Gadgil, J. Ward, T. Labelle, A. P. Costa, A. K. Divekar, Dr. M. B. Thakore, M. H. Vakil, R. B. Lotevala, Dr. T. J. Thomson Wells, E. J. Marquis, A. Raptokos, S. A. Brelvi, L. R. Tairsee, Mrs. P. D. Wadia.

Dr. Deshmukh occupied the chair.

The notice of the meeting having been read, the minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The Secretary read the annual report and the Treasurer the statement of accounts.

The president moved the adoption of the report and the statement of accounts.

In considering the report Mr. Masani was of opinion that the Association had not done anything to carry out the primary object of spreading the movement amongst the masses. He therefore suggested that at the first meeting of the new committee the latter body should consider ways and means of executing our first object. One of the means of doing so was to distribute pamphlets in the vernaculars in the mill area to the mill hands and he opined that the cost should not be too much for the Association to bear.

Mr. P. Tricumdas supported Mr. Masani. He gave the example of "The Rationalist" of Madras which was sold in large numbers within a few months after its foundation. He put this down to the fact that "The Rationalist" was more of a live organ dealing with all subjects that affected ordinary human beings while "Reason" was more detached. In his opinion it was not enough to have lectures limited to the intelligentia but he wanted the association to organise lectures to the working classes. He further thought that the formation of a Birth Control Clinic under the auspices of the Association would go a long way.

Dr. C. L. D'Avoine considered the suggestion of introducing rationalistic literature amongst the masses impracticable as they did not have the preliminary education to follow the above. He thought that more good would come if these leaflets were distributed in areas inhabited by middle class of people and in places frequented by them. He felt that the word masses in the objects of the Association was a wrong one and ought to be changed.

Mr. Dubash suggested that greater use must be made of the press for the purposes of propaganda. He put forward the suggestion that Rationalists must fight for a status as a distinct unit of society with their own social laws and ethical code. Even though the Rationalists by renouncing religion have attempted to throw off the slavery of these bodies yet, in ordinary life as it exists a Rationalist is tried and judged by the existing laws which are all based on religions that have been renounced.

Mr. Ward advised caution and thought that the first thing the Association should do was to capture the intelligentia

of the country and the field in this direction was hardly touched.

The report and the audited statement of accounts was then adopted.

The following office bearers were then elected :

President, G. V. Deshmukh; proposed by D. R. D. Wadia, seconded by T. J. Wells.

Vice-Presidents Dr. A. S. Erulkar, C. L. D'Avoine; proposed by G. Coelho, seconded by Mr. DaCosta.

Treasurer D. R. D. Wadia, proposed by R. D. Karve, seconded by M. H. Vakil,

Executive Committee, M. A. Somejee, T. J. Thompson Wells, S. S. Brelvi, R. B. Lotevala, M. H. Vakil, V. Khanolkar, P. Tricumdas, M. R. P. Masani, proposed by C. L. D'Avoine and seconded by R. D. Karve.

Honorary Secretaries G. Coelho and R. D. Karve, proposed by M. R. P. Masani, and seconded by P. Tricumdas.

The President moved

"That this meeting of the Rationalist Association of India greatly appreciates the services rendered in the Reason case by Messrs. F. S. Talyarkhan, C. N. Kanuga, R. F. S. Talyarkhan and as Counsel and Messrs. Mahimtura & Co. Solicitors and resolves that a token be presented to them as a mark of appreciation."

Carried unanimously.

The President moved.....

"That this meeting thanks our honorary auditors for having so kindly audited our accounts for the year under report."

Carried unanimously.

With a vote of thanks to the Chair the meeting terminated.

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Annual Report for 1933

1. Office-Bearers.

President

G. V. Deshmukh, M.D., F.R.C.S.

Vice-Presidents

A. S. Tyebji

C. L. D'Avoine, M.D.

Honorary Treasurer

D. R. D. Wadia, Bar-at-Law.

Honorary Secretaries

G. Coelho, M.B., M.R.C.P.

R. D. Karve, M.A.

Members of Ex. Comm.

A. S. Erulkar, M.D.

V. R. Khanolkar M.D.

R. B. Lotevala

S. A. Megherian

Miss P. N. Nariman

M. A. Somejee, M.A., Bar-at-Law

T. J. Wells

M. H. Vakil, M.A., B.L.

2. **Members.** The year opened with 182 members—Of these four were life members. The year ended with 181 members. During the year 22 refused to renew their subscriptions, three resigned, three died. Five ordinary members became Life members. There were 27 new members.

3. **Reason.** 500 copies of this monthly are printed and distributed. Besides the members a large number of libraries all over India are maintained on the circulation list. Because of financial difficulties it has not been possible to increase the size of the journal. It is also difficult to get contributions.

4. **Library.** More books have been issued to the members than before. Our donors this year have been Lt. Col.

Sanjana, Mr. Ram Gopal, Mr. D. R. D. Wadia and Mr. DaCosta. Mr. Sanjana continues to send his copy of Free Thinker which is afterwards circulated amongst a group of Muslim Rationalists who are running a circulating library.

5. **Finance.** A separate statement of accounts will be presented by the Honorary Treasurers. From that it will be evident that we are badly off. During the year some gentlemen were good enough to offer us donations; some have been paid some are still outstanding. The Committee hopes that these persons will be good enough to pay in their contributions early.

6. **Other activities.** A public discussion on birth control was organised by the Association. Drs. Khanolkar, Erulkar, Mr. Vakil, Mr. Karve and Prof. Asana took part. The meeting was packed. It created a great deal of interest and was followed by meetings on the same subject in other learned societies in Bombay.

7. **Government prosecutes the Editor of Reason.** At the end of the year, on the 5th of December, sanction was accorded by the local government of Bombay to prosecute the Editor of "Reason" for articles that appeared in the September issue of "Reason" under section 295-A. Copies were seized from the press and the C. I. D. officers visiting the offices of the Association "requested" for all the available copies of the September issue of "Reason". The result of this will be embodied in the report for the year 1934.

8. **Hony. Auditors.** Messrs Cornelius and Davar have again kindly acted as our honorary auditors.

DINNER OF RATIONALISTS

The annual meeting was followed by a dinner when Dr. D'Avoine was congratulated on his acquittal. The Moorish Room of the Taj Mahal Hotel was filled with members and their guests. Amongst the guests were Messrs. F. S. Talyarkhan, C. N. Kanuga, R. F. S. Talyarkhan, Mr. Mahimtura our Counsel and Solicitor, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, Mr. Huseinbhoy Laljee, Raja Bahadur Govindlal Pittie and Mr. B. G. Horniman. There was a fairly good attendance of ladies this year. Mr. Horniman in proposing the toast of Dr. D'Avoine congratulated him on the bold fight he had put up against superstition. He drew the attention of the gathering to the religious journals which indulge in abuse and in villification of their opponents, and to religious leaders who also do likewise. But all these carry on unhampered. The acquittal of Dr. D'Avoine meant that we have the right to say what we think is right so long as one does not go out of one's way to outrage the feelings of others. He was not sure whether this was a precursor of other triumphs, but all the same, he advised caution as the fight for freedom was not yet over. Mr. Tairsee, supporting Mr. Horniman, referred to Kursandas Muljee and Bradlaugh who were both reformers and ultimately won their point. He said that vested interests were against Rationalism and the chief opponents were priests who ran religion as a profitable business, and a business without capital to boot. They were trying their level best to keep people in religion. His sympathies for Dr. D'Avoine were perhaps greater than those of others as he had suffered like the doctor. Dr. D'Avoine in his reply thanked the speakers and the friends who had met there to congratulate him as well as all those who had written to him or congratulated him personally. He did not consider it as a personal triumph, but as a vindication of free expression of opinion. After discussing the case with his Counsel he was satisfied that he would be acquitted. His great fear was

that, if convicted, it meant an end not only to his writings but to the liberty of free expression. He was very thankful to Mr. Talyarkhan and Mr. C. N. Kanuga and his Solicitors for the able way they had conducted his defence.

Dr. Deshmukh, the President, then gave the toast of Messrs F. S. Talyarkhan, Kanuga, R. F. S. Talyarkhan and Mahimtura. He said the Association was very poor and could not afford to pay the high fees that might have been necessary. But both Mr. Kanuga and Mr. Talyarkhan as well as the Solicitors on being approached willingly gave us their services without any remuneration. The Association was very thankful to them and he requested them to be good enough to accept the small tokens that the Association offered to them as a mark of appreciation. Mr. Talyarkhan, replying, spoke of the great field for Rationalism and wished the Association success as there was a large scope for the Association to work to clear the long night of ignorance and superstition in India. Mr. Kanuga associated himself with Mr. Talyarkhan.

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai gave the toast "Prosperity to the Rationalist Association of India." He spoke of the terrible exploitation of the mind that has been systematically carried on by priests for centuries, and dwelt at length on the function of the Association which should be to put an end to this exploitation. Priests, he said, had exploited the mind of man for the basest of purposes and in this their methods were despotic.

Dr. Coelho thanked Mr. Desai and the guests for their good wishes. He pointed out that the Rationalist Association of India was a little candle-light flickering in the dark night of superstition and invited all those that felt the curse of superstition to join the Association so that it may swell to a bright light lasting right through the night and facilitating the on ward march of progress.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road, Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hon'y. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS.

The centenary of Karsondas Muljee, the fearless Hindu social reformer, was celebrated with great pomp at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall, Bombay, on the 9th of March last. In the absence of His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda who was unfortunately prevented by illness from presiding at this function. Her Highness Maharani Gaekwar was elected to the chair.

Long before the proceedings started the vast hall and galleries were packed to suffocation. It was unfortunate that many, who were anxious to pay their

homage to this Indian "Charles Bradlaugh" had to go away disappointed as it was impossible to secure even standing accommodation. Several speakers, among whom were Mr. K. Natarajan, Mr. Maneckji Patel, Mr. Lakmidas Rowjee Tairsee, Mr. K. M. Munshi and Mr. Chagla eulogized the great work the late Mr. Karsondas did in the teeth of fierce opposition and the salutary reform he introduced into the religious and social atmosphere of an important Hindu community in Western India. The address of H. H. the Gaekwar of Baroda was read by a Colonel of the Baroda army. In it he gave expression to very broad and liberal ideas on social and religious progress which were listened to with wrapt attention. These enlightened ideas of H. H. do great credit to him as a progressive and cultured Prince.

* * *

It is impossible to realize the depth of moral degradation and religious imbecility in which that community had fallen unless one reads the legal proceedings instituted against Karsondas Muljee in the High Court of Bombay in 1862. That prosecution was launched against him by some of the "holy" Maharajas he had exposed. Fifteen or twenty years ago these could be read in a booklet entitled the *Ras Lila Case* obtainable at some book-sellers in Bombay. The present writer, who had the opportunity of reading this, was horrified to learn the abominations and practices perpetrated by those Maharajas under the cloak of religion. It is really a wonder that religion can so hypnotize people as to make them submit so abjectly to the outrages of their priests in the manner that community did. When it is recalled that

that community, which is a large one, is one of the richest in Western India and contains many intelligent and successful business men, it revolts one to think that, not only did they submit readily to the abominable wickedness of those holy priests who dishonoured and outraged their wives, sisters and daughters in the most disgusting manner, they actually resented and protested against the exposure of these priests by Karsondas Muljee. It is hard to believe, yet it is a fact that with the exception of a few upright individuals in that community, they all turned against Karsondas and sided with their corrupted priests! It is the same story all over the world. All reformers of a corrupted system of religion have always met with the hostility of the people who mistake them for enemies of their religion. Such is the inevitable result of blind faith and bigotry.

* * *

One must not imagine that such stupid people have all died since 1862. They are even more numerous to day, at any rate, in this country. One has only to speak against the degrading superstitions the priests of any religion teach and encourage, for the people concerned to raise their ignorant voices in indignant protest. As Voltaire truly said: "To enlighten such people is a dangerous and thankless job. They are like the patients who sometimes assault their physicians." Karsondas' life was often in danger when he was dealing with that question. Yet, as Sir John Beaumont, The Chief Justice of Bombay, said when presiding at another function recently held in Bombay in honour of Karsondas, "He, Karsondas, was not anti-religious. He did not attack any of the principles of the Hindu faith. What he attacked

was the abuses which had grown within that faith. History showed that in almost all religious systems the priests had a tendency to make claims amongst an ignorant congregation which the founder of the religion never intended to make; to assert an intimacy with the deity which no human being could in fact enjoy; and to take advantage of their claims in order to commit acts which were wholly wrong." "That phenomenon," continued Sir John Beaumont, "was not peculiar to the Hindu religion. The same sort of thing also happened to Christianity in the Middle Ages. History has shown that it was very difficult to combat such abuses, for not only did priests have great temporal influence, not only were they able to cause a great deal of trouble to their enemy in this world, but they can also threaten him with unknown penalties in the next and therefore they have considerable advantage at the start."

Every sensible person will, of course, agree with what Sir John Beaumont said. One, however, must not saddle the Middle Ages only with all the abuses that have disgraced Christianity. There are still many such abuses and disgusting superstitions in that creed which are a disgrace to our present civilization. Only, one must not speak about it; there are still millions of ignorant and bigoted Christians who vehemently resent any attack on such practices. When they cannot safely crack your head, they run to the police for protection! This alone shows the immense power the priest still wields over the masses. By a curious process of reasoning these thoughtless people, these poor victims of a debased system, have been made to believe that it is sinful to say that a priest can do wrong; that all who speak against priests are the enemies of

religion; that they are wicked people and should not be listened to as they are all liars; and whatever the priests do is always for the good of the people, for the cause of civilization and for the greater glory of God! Therefore all who decry against priestcraft are the emissaries of Satan, the sworn enemies of God. It is by such reasoning that Socrates was executed, Jesus Christ was crucified. Thousands of brave reformers have suffered for their boldness in attacking priestcraft.

We, Rationalists, are optimistic enough to believe that education will in the end enlighten people and enable them to see things in their true light—perhaps so; but one must not forget that the priest can still command great influence and can command the support of millions who are too ready to listen to him.

* * *

Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore was not the only person in India who was shocked at Mr. Gandhi's outburst on the Bihar Earth-quake. It surprised many that Mr. Gandhi should have taken advantage of this awful calamity to exploit popular feelings. Mr. Gandhi did so in the best style of any blatant Christian preacher. He thought that God had sent that fearful calamity as a punishment for the neglect of the Harijans. As Dr. Tagore truly said, it surprises one that a person of Mr. Gandhi's culture and education should ascribe a natural phenomenon caused by the inexorableness of universal laws to the wrath of a capricious God. Rather than calling this the work of a wise god, one would be justified in putting it down to the mischief of a malevolent fiend, blind in his fury and pitiless in his execution. It was, and is still, the fashion with Christian preachers to raise the hair of their followers with such stories of the

wrath of God after a great calamity. It is at such times that the priest never misses the opportunity of warning people that "a just and offended God punishes severely those who neglect the Church and do not listen to priests." The belief in the wrath of God is a profitable business for the Churches. It matters not whether it degrades God and reduces him to the level of a petty tyrant, cruel and revengeful. FEAR is, indeed, the motive power that keeps the Churches going.

* * *

Nothing, in our opinion, can beat certain Roman Catholic bigots of this city for sheer stupidity. Our acquittal and the universal approval of it in India seem to have upset them very badly. As a matter of fact, they alone were jubilant when the case was pending as they expected a sure conviction. In their sullenness and mortification they vented their spleen by proclaiming in the press that (1) While the case caused considerable interest, they alone were indifferent about it (2) That they did not care two hoots about rationalistic literature in general and our writings in particular as their faith is

above reason (3) That their Church has stood the onslaughts of Rationalism triumphantly for the last nineteen hundred years and it is not likely to be perturbed by rationalistic propaganda. As regards the first everybody knows today who ran to the Police for protection, believing as they did that our efforts in the cause of Rationalism here are meeting with considerable success; the second assurance is superfluous as no Catholic is permitted to read rationalistic writings; the third only proclaims their profound ignorance of the history of their church, its present condition and the crushing victories that Rationalism has already won over it, though it is only two centuries old. They cannot even realize that during its career the Church had to contend a good deal against rival creeds which it suppressed by force, but never before met the formidable forces of Rationalism except quite recently. Already the bottom has been knocked out of the church. They are unintelligent enough not to understand that other religions also seem apparently strong as they have still millions of adherents.

THE MYTH OF THE RESURRECTION.

A reader of "REASON", who is evidently not a Rationalist, has sent us an article on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ which he found in a religious journal. He seems to think that the article in question is so interesting as to deserve the serious consideration of all Rationalists. That article entitled "Reason and the Resurrection" is taken from a book, "Conversions to the Catholic Church" by Christopher Hollis, who says that he was converted to the Catholic Church

from the Church of England. Though we find nothing remarkable in it, it being of the usual type written by people of a credulous disposition, we have decided to notice it in these columns to show the fallacious arguments that still prevail on this question. That article, as one may guess, purports to prove that the resurrection of Jesus rests on undeniable evidence, and that if it was not a fact his disciples would not from the beginning have preached it with the conviction that

made them suffer death rather than denying it. He also opines that if the resurrection was not a fact Christianity would not have come into existence. Most Rationalists will not agree with this. Without the story of the resurrection, Christianity would, doubtless, have been robbed of a good deal of its supernatural claim, but there is no reason why it should not have come into existence notwithstanding. Several systems of religion before Christianity flourished very well, and some of them like Hinduism and Buddhism are still going strong; while Islamism, which is today a widespread religion, did not require any story of resurrection to become one of the great religions of the world. It is also a fallacy to imagine that Christianity originated all of a sudden with the mission of Jesus Christ. It was a growth from earlier beliefs and speculations, and took shape in the ordinary way. To deny this is to assume that Judaism was the only religion which prevailed in Asia Minor and that no other cults existed. The story of Jesus might have given it an impetus which it needed to spread; but this is a different story to the belief that it originated like wild fire soon after the alleged resurrection in Palestine. Many eminent scholars today, who have devoted their lives to the study of this question, believe the story to be a myth based on some legends current in that part of the world two thousand years ago. It is difficult to reject this opinion as the nature of the case proves it to be, indeed, a legend.

Christianity, in effect, claims that its Founder was publicly slain in a populous city, was buried in it and came to life again after spending some thirty six hours in the grave. This is alleged to have taken place at a certain time in the history of the world. It, therefore, falls

within the sphere of historical science, and the methods of that science must be employed to establish it on a historical basis. Mr. Hollis admits this for he says, "One had to approach the question exactly as one would have approached any other historical question—to consider the evidence for and against Julius Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon".

Did Mr. Hollis do so conscientiously? At the outset we find him to be temperamentally not a fit person to do so. He is, assuredly, too easily convinced, and he entertains some unjustifiable bias and prejudice against certain people who, he says, denied that story. He says, in effect, "that these early enemies of the Christians denied the Resurrection but they never denied the existence of Christ nor the crucifixion as they obviously would have done had it been possible to do so". Why should they have denied the existence of Christ or his crucifixion if they were sure that these were facts? There is nothing strange that a certain person may have existed and that he was publicly executed; but the story that the person, who was dead and buried, came back to life is so absolutely contrary to all human experience that any one is quite justified in demanding the most rigorous proof and evidence to that effect. Is that forthcoming? Please note the gratuitous assumption that these deniers, probably honest and sincere people, were actuated by bad faith. Is not this the familiar method of Catholics to raise prejudice against their opponents?

What reliable and unimpeachable evidence have we that the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus were facts that cannot be disputed? We have none; except a few unreliable documents that have come down to us, known as the Gospels and Epistles, written long

after these alleged events are said to have taken place by people who could not have been eye witnesses to these things. It is remarkable that not a single historian or writer living at or shortly after the time Jesus is said to have moved about in Palestine preserves even his name. These early Christians were obliged to resort to the dishonest practice of interpolating a brief passage in the works of Josephus to make it appear that he knew something about Jesus. Even theologians today are obliged to admit that the passage in question is a spurious one!

Yes, this remarkable silence of the great historian and philosopher who lived at that time is most significant. As Professor Schmiedel, who is an acknowledged great Biblical scholar says, "The meagreness of the historical testimony regarding Jesus, whether in canonical writings outside the Gospels or in profane writers such as Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonis, and Pliny, is most pronounced." Yet, Jerusalem, at that time, was a cosmopolitan city, and many of its inhabitants, besides the Jews, should have heard of the wonderful events which are said to have taken place within its walls. Are we to believe that human nature then was different from what it is now? Is it possible to imagine that everybody, except a few disciples and women, was indifferent about such a wonderful story? What could have prevented a risen God from walking publicly in to the city to confound his enemies and to proclaim his glory? Nothing of the kind took place. Even St. Paul did not know anything about it! How does a believer account for this significant silence? The Gospels, them selves, throw light on the question. It is clear on reading these writings that they were not written by eye witnesses.

We know today that they were written by people who tried to put on record the beliefs and traditions current among the disciples and early followers of Jesus some decades after his death. Few, to day, would dispute that the earliest Gospel, that of Mark was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70; Matthew, about 119 A. D.; Luke, between 100 and 110; and John between 132 and 140. It is certain that the authors of these Gospels depended on earlier materials and that they were not very critical about what they heard. If these were written by people who were perfectly acquainted with the alleged facts they set out to put on record, they would have surely not contained so many discrepancies. It is well known that the narratives of the resurrection contained in the four Gospels present many remarkable discrepancies which seriously deteriorate their value as evidence. While it is true that the narratives of an event by different historians may contain unimportant discrepancies, which do not necessarily impugn the reality of the event narrated, those found in the four Gospels are not of that nature; they contradict one another on very vital points which render them useless as reliable evidence. The following shows a few of these serious discrepancies as found in the four Gospels:—

(1°) They differ as to the number of the women. John mentions only *one*, Mary Magdalene; Mathew *two*, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary; Mark *three*, the two Marys and Salome;—Luke, *several*, the two Marys, Joanna, and "certain others with them."

(2) They differ as to the number of persons in white raiment who appeared to the women. Mark speaks of one "young

man"; Matthew of one "angel";—Luke of two "men";—John of two "angels". According to John, also, the appearance of the two angels was not till Mary's second visit of the Tomb, after Peter and John had been there.

(3) They differ as to the words spoken by the apparition. According to Matthew and Mark they asserted the resurrection of Jesus and his departure into Galilee, and sent a message to his disciples enjoining them to follow him thither. According to Luke they simply stated that he was risen, and referred to former predictions of his to this effect. According to John they only asked Mary, "Woman! why weepest thou?"

(4) They differ in another point. According to Mathew, Luke, and John, the women carried the information as to what they had seen at once to the disciples. According to Mark "they said nothing to any man."

(5) They differ as to the parties to whom Jesus appeared. According to Mark it was to no one. According to Matthew it was first to the two women, then to the eleven. According to John it was first to one woman then twice to the assembled Apostles. According to Luke it was first to no woman, but to Cleophas and his companion, then to Peter, and then to the assembled eleven.

(6) They differ as to the locality. According to Mark it was nowhere. According to Matthew it was first at Jerusalem and then at Galilee, whither the disciples went in obedience to the angelic command. According to Luke it was in Jerusalem and its vicinity and *there alone*, where the disciples remained in obedience to the reiterated command of Jesus himself. (Luke XXIV 49, 53, Acts 1-4.) Luke and Matthew

thus contradict each other beyond all possibility of reconciliation. Matthew tells us that Jesus commanded them to go into Galilee, and they went thither; (Galilee is at least a 100 miles distant from Jerusalem, beyond the mountains of Samaria). Luke tells us that he positively commanded them "not to depart from Jerusalem," and that they remained there (xxiv 53). If Matthew is right, the story of Thomas, one of the eleven who was in Jerusalem some days after the event and would not be convinced unless he saw Jesus personally, becomes nonsensical. According to Matthew he, also, should have gone into Galilee. John, also one of the eleven, contradicts the departure of the disciples to Galilee. But Luke contradicts himself quite flatly on another point. In the Gospel he represents the Ascension as taking place on the evening of the third day after the crucifixion: such is the clear meaning of the text (as may be seen from verses 21, 33, 36, 50):—in the Acts he places the Ascension forty days after the Resurrection, and says that Jesus was seen by his disciples during the whole interval!

After a critical study of these Gospels and Epistles one can arrive at the only sensible conclusion possible, the only one that can be reasonably accepted, namely, that certain followers of Jesus, who it is quite possible was executed in Jerusalem, not by the Jews who had no legal right to do so, but by the Romans who were then in power, firmly believed that he was resurrected and they preached this with all the conviction they were capable of. Believers lay great stress on this, assuming as they do that these timid and uninfluential followers would not have done so unless they were absolutely convinced of the resurrection of their Master. It is precisely this erroneous

assumption that leads to a great error of judgment on this question. Many people are apt to imagine that these early followers of Jesus must have been people of great intellectual culture who were incapable of entertaining any erroneous beliefs or ideas and what they believed to be true must be sufficient for us. As a matter of fact, they were a very credulous lot who believed many absurd things. They certainly believed it to be an every day occurrence that dead men came back to life again. The story of Lazarus, and that of the saints who rose from their graves in Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified, and other such stories show that such men did not require much evidence or proof to believe in resurrections. A mere rumour must have been enough for them especially as their minds were already prepared for such an event. A favourable state of the mind, as we all know, can account for many things that would be impossible to one not so disposed. Mr. Hollis says that their preaching met with enormous hostility. One can quite believe this; because it must have been quite natural for the people of Jerusalem to take them for a crowd of lunatics to preach such nonsense. Would it have been so if the people of that city were convinced that such an extraordinary event had really happened? On the contrary, it is more than probable that a tremendous reaction in favour of Jesus would have set in which no enemies of his could have stemmed. But Jesus, after his alleged resurrection, did not appear pub-

licly in Jerusalem to cause that reaction and to confound his enemies!

Mr. Hollis seems to attach much importance to the, now, discredited story of the "empty tomb" (See Encyclopedia Biblica par 138 where the reasons are given why the story of the empty tomb cannot be entertained.) This story, in effect, is to be found only in the very Gospels that we have discovered cannot be trusted as unimpeachable evidence. Possibly he also believes the story that Roman soldiers were placed at the grave, an evident clumsy invention of later dates!

We have also to bear in mind that the disciples of Jesus, who expected the end of the world to take place in their lifetime, and the kingdom of the Messiah to be established in heaven, may not have believed in the actual resurrection of his body, but of his spirit. Here, again, the Gospels seem to indicate this. Most of the apparitions recorded were, indeed, in the nature of a spiritual manifestation. Even Peter did not clearly recognize Jesus when he appeared to him in Galilee, and the others to whom he appeared experienced the same difficulty. Whatever may have been the belief of these men, it is simply preposterous to ask us to believe as they did because some of them gave their lives for their convictions. This might have some weight if we did not know that the devotees of other religions, held by Christians to be false, have frequently given their lives for the faith they professed.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

RATIONALISM AND INDIAN RECONSTRUCTION.

(A Prospect of good-humour in Indian Life.)

Let me consult an astrologer as to the problem that confronted me in my fifth year, which recurred forty years after, to a whole set of brains. In the early nineties, life here was freer. At least, that was the child-experience that walked the streets nude without protest. Civilisation crushes even the cradle under cumbrous clothing. The trappings of the full-suit lend decency to boyhood, though latterly the half-knikker attested the relativity of good taste for even the adult. It is fabled of Paris, that skirts promise to meet other vestments, but to the new-world is given the colonial order to patronise nature in all naturalness. Mr. G. B. Shaw as witness his African black girl forgot her god-quest mending her husband's clothes which she could not persuade him to cease to wear. Before India is held the picture of the loin-cloth. Will that go to—? One half of human want in this world, and the opportunity of the other, hangs on whether, and in what degree, clothes hang about us.

Who has got to search long to find reasons for both the ends of fine feeling? In mediæval times, cleanliness was a point of theological debate. Henry C. Lea's documented book, "the History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church" proves the rigours of clerical observance that left no time to take good care of God's temple by washing or cleaning. Disease was hailed as the divine pleasure to sound the devotion to the Lord. To administer drugs to alleviate pain ill-accommodated with orthodox notions of human ethics. Our faiths were not farther from Catholic rigour.

"Kimaushadhaih klisyasi mudh durmate" (the stupid and perverse man that bothers about drugs or medicines, Mukundamala, Sloka 31, line 3.) is the voice of the same spirit. It is an un-stinting allegiance to the supernatural. Withal, reasons are assigned even by the visionary for his dreams. To wash, to clean, and dress properly, even they are not absolute axiomatic postulates.

The variety of human reason is such that there is not a place under the sun whereat it does not enter its caveat. It has a hold on the hair, on the head, on the chin, on the face which it variously remarks. It perforates the ear and the nose, and tears the skin. Religion touches the barber's shave, the washers tub, and the cobbler's shoe. Thanks to the Golden Bough (our tenderest sympathy to Sir James G. Frazer for the blindness that has overtaken him in old age) even the waste nail-clippings have had a sanctity of theirs. And religion is nothing if it is not man's first, primary, reason, though a supernatural one, for the universe and his own place therein.

We close a third of the present century. In England—and France counts a yet earlier record of Rationalism—it stands for the age of the Rationalist Press Association, a body organised to propagate the doctrine of the supremacy of reason. Here we now witness the new birth of an avowed rational press. But the margin of thirty years between a father-land and a mother-country is not great disparity, provided the temperaments agree. The century and half of the joint lives of partnership is on one side. But human will is not produced

in straight lines, so that the parallellism once started in chance history may remain constant. Incompatability of temper is not uncommon at advanced ages of the contracting parties. Visions of an economic culture are not the less obtrusive. Where domestic relation is none too facile for an inert massive dame yoked by irritating steel to force marching ahead of reason, the rub is there, soft though the eye-wash within, and neat the whitewash, without.

That is rambling into the field of political or economic reconstruction, on which mostly social life is grounded. Some even hold that Rationalism is identical with Socialism, which may be left for examination later. Here it is permissible to point out that India is not ruled from Johnson's Court, the Head Quarters of the R. P. A., but from Whitehall, the bureaucratic centre wherefrom emanate its naval, military, administrative impulses. Not in the volumes of rationalist literature, but through ordinance and rule impressed in the blue books and white-papers, is the destiny of the evolution of the entire continent sealed. Just as for an individual a sense of fatality, divine coercion, cripples the freedom of moral responsibility, even so, for the vast country, freewill is determined from without. Apostles of English liberty, seers of social wisdom, spirits that moved in J. S. Mill, Bentham, Spencer, Bradlaugh, and the rest, Rationalists, past and present, do you hear?

Till lately, John Bull had been a good-natured Banya gentleman. He had the sense to give and take, though the Guzerati Banya that towered into the Mahatma would complain that he took more than he ever gave, or even intended to give. Since when the head of

Oxford-culture gave away Indian reins, English humour seems to have gone into the waning moon. In times of uncommon penury and want, good-humour is the last thing to stay. "You will teach me, eh, will you?"—thundered a husband, power-drunk. And the wife knows she is in the grip of hunger, of relentless waste, her house ill-furnished, and disorder, stores empty, and the children crying from hunger, ignorance and disease.

Little indeed is the possibility of reconstruction handicapped by empty purse, and an enfeebled power to sense things aright. Science is a costly midwife. Birth-control tends to lessen unborn entries into misery-competition. Even that we are not free to teach. Like the mediæval canonised saints, there be clerics that raise the hue and cry against wanton interference with God's mystery-plan. Ecclesiastical justice has a soft corner for germ-plasm. Where it does not impregnate, they are powerless to banish disease, but where it is sought to regulate, they have their hoarse sermons ready. Abhorance of the science of medicine is reincarnate in our century in the modified form, though drugs and the use of anæsthetics to soften pain and ailment have survived the primitive gods.

Control or none, children are born. Feed and clothe the child one must, in the hot as in the cold climates. But before it begins to feel that it is one among the millions that open their eyes under the same sun, before it knows the unity or similarity of child-life, in food and raiment, in the way the hair is worn, tuft and pigtail, and all that marks for the peculiar community of the accident of its birth is soon impressed on the little person. In its first syllables it lisps the spirit of the Fearful Person that haunts

its memory ever thereafter. The black Krishna, the white-robed Jesus, or the brown or yellow Prophet fills the miraculous presence. Juvenile queries are referred back to the sayings and doings of the unexplained faith, and life expands entwined on one or other of the historic creeds. Mostly it is the survival of the fear in the jungle.

At school careful design curbs bubbling originality. Inconvenient questions are avoided or duly punished. And thanks to an obliging overlord, religious instruction is not farther away from entrance. Christian Missions tell bible-prayers, and Moslem schools gain their birthright. A little attention will sound the Gita tunes for the Hindu too. Tight compartments revive diversities of faith, which the comparative method may turn to advantage. Are we going to accentuate these differences, or are we to obliterate the demarcations? Are we going to plan a programme of conscious activity or shall we ride on the policy of drift? It all depends on the place you give to the race-horse of Indian Reason.

Elsewhere human genius has probed into the problems of society. Eugenics, the young science of population minds the balancing of supply and demand. Family limitation, contraceptives, sterilisation of mental defectives and the physically unfit, diseases, its cure and prevention, segregation &c. are some instruments in her laboratory. In medicine natural therapy is fast replacing the methods of secrecy and witchcraft. Even psycho-therapeutics is claimed to be broadbased on natural science, more than on supernatural intervention. While we have not yet taken to sectarian merger or the fusion of the castes, or reached anywhere near untouchability,

education, housing, sanitation and secular morality concern high and low alike. Unemployment has not caught the ear of the temple, and the Mutt, cloister, church or mosque, whose spiritual quests ought to mould man into better shape. Properly harnessed, does not the wealth beneath the idol and the Peeth, contribute to the common weal? When may charitable foundations cease to feed the idler? When to turn them into poor-houses, the nucleus to provide for the destitute, weak, disabled, maimed or the diseased?

Are women to be put forward as an eternally distinct species of animals? Or will they share with men in greater abundance, the benefits of education, vocational training, fine arts or learned professions? Where are they now in the matter of competence for maternity or child-welfare, in public service or franchise? Will they ever become really independent to handle the purse? Going down, when will the prostitute and the dancing girl cease her trade? When shall tolerated houses disappear? And in the name of religion which was man's jealousy, shall marriage remain for ever the over-stressed mystery-affair in life that it continues to this day? Severally, and by appropriate organisation, legislative and judicial assistance, when will infant-marriage, money-making alliance, or close-circle-union become social impossibilities? By all these means, will remarriage, intercaste marriage and inter-racial union be promoted to mitigate caste-prejudice and remove the colour-bar? Where the union proves unsuccessful, when will men and women be free to tell each other their minds plainly, without society interposing shackles to perpetuate the

conventional lie? When will man regain the sense of proportion that his existence bears to the vast universe? When do the ghosts that he raised in individual and social life disappear? To our nearest neighbour a visitor from Mars, when shall he appear just a man, no more, no less? With no pretensions to mysterious supernatural association, when will human reason plod along the weary path of social experiment and failure, and in the lessons of defeat that nature provides, vision forth the promise of further stages in evolution?

Some Rationalist friends also ask for my card. Some hold that none may be a Rationalist that is not a Socialist. It may be right. But as every judgment, it may be only relatively correct. It would be also true to say that none may be a Rationalist unless he is a cleric; at any rate, a stranger to Clericalism may not make a good Rationalist. Socialism is an economic issue. Money is a sectional phase of human life, howsoever important its domain. If you please, you may call it rationalist economics, just as one may speak of rationalised engineering, law, medicine, or something else. Rationalism has a wider, more comprehensive rôle. It is essentially a mental attitude, opposed to the acceptance as truth of the dogmatic supernatural claims of religion. A Catholic may be an engineer, lawyer, or doctor, as also a Protestant, and the Rationalist. The basic investigations of their respective faiths lead each one of them to behave differently from the rest, perhaps, even in the very exercise of their callings; though one would be a bad engineer that prays that the river-flood may subside, be a bad doctor that prays for his patient's recovery, and the bad lawyer that prays

that his client may win the cause. The Rationalist is on firmer ground with regard to his facts than the religionist professional whose basis is relatively more fictional. So too, the religious economist is more allied to individualist capitalist exploiter than to Socialism. But on that very score, Socialism does not connote Rationalism. The coercive element may intrude therein. Rationalism fights arbitrary authority on all fronts. Reports of enforced socialism verging on the irrational are conveyed regarding Bolshevist regime. We may not judge of their truth, as interested mud-slinging or white-washing does not help in its discovery.

I only repeat in this context what Prof. H. J. Laski reminds us in his article (*Rationalist Annual*, 1934) on the "Social Obligation of Rationalists" that 'eternal vigilance is the inescapable price of freedom' here, there, and elsewhere. Rationalism stands for individual liberty, no less than for social emancipation. "Scientific socialism" may be a more practical ideal than the vision of an "enlightened anarchy," where each citizen is a sage, and there is no need for government from without in any form. But even Socialism may not avoid class-war, or group conflict. The highest reach of the natural philosopher has gained the nomenclature 'scientific humanism' which in its sweep round the planet is one entire race. Liberal rationalism ought not long to remain the preserve of the few, but the possession of the many. Its spirit ought to remain constantly inclusive, unlike religion which is nothing if not exclusive. Else it withers away even faster than faith, for it has not its backing in wealth or power. As freedom is relative, so will

Rationalism be wholesomely relative to the environment as the body of reference. After Einstein, we are no longer believers in the absolute, good or bad, the God or the Evil one.

Doubtless, India is the land of the idolator. We shall be missing the real spirit of our lives, were we to neglect that fact. Discarded idols need something to replace with. Rationalist efforts may succeed by a judicious displacement of idolatry through ideolatry. It is not worse than Bibliolatry, Mariolatry, Hitlerolatry or Mussolini-worship. Man has nowhere ceased to worship ideas. What we should guard against is the tendency to transfer such worship to the men that are responsible for these ideas. When we respect ideas, we are aware that they may be only partially true, as no truth that is absolute is within human reach. We presume that truth has limits. But when we begin to deify men, we lose light of the natural. Hero-worship is a subtle insidious process of supernaturalism, and is the worst enemy that reason has to contend against. As Carlyle stressed, Odin who invented rhunes (*the primitive script*) was acclaimed as God by fellowmen and he too felt that perhaps he was the divinity that others supposed to rest in him. Such petrified allegiance, resting on the so-called religious sense, brings in the whole volume of the spirit of mystification. Human nature the world over is given to ideolatry, which is another name for the worship of reason. But while elsewhere man employs reason, India loses herself immersed in the worship. A concrete instance will illustrate this indiscriminate submission. Man has long reflected on the prosperities of the circle. He invented the wheel. While machine-industry the world over pays practical

homage to the plain and the clogged wheels in the million, India yet paints with saffron, turmeric or kunkum, and breaks coconuts on the wooden wheels of bullock-bandy, or the more recent spinning wheel. We have not applied Vishnu's weapon to our industry on any appreciable scale, but chant learned verses in praise of the Charkra. We seem to possess an innate aptitude to symbolise readily, and employ the remote figures of speech in our daily affairs, and think in terms of the synecdoche, and metonymy. We have lost the real spirit of the Bhagvad-Gita which taught:

Yyavasayatmika buddhir ekeha
kurunandana

Bahusakhayanantascha
buddhayoavyavasayinam (II 41)

(Determinate reason is one-pointed, O, Joy of the Kurus, varied and unceasing are the ratiocinations of the irresolute)

Given any set of facts, to reason out the effect should not be difficult. Failure results from defective reasoning led by an imperfect knowledge of the data. This Buddhi Yoga (the exercise of reason) is expressly enjoined throughout. (See, II, 39, 40, 49, 50, X, 10, XVIII, 57). We may fold up the book, if we please, and folding our brains, we may worship the volume with flowers and sweet food-offering, secreting at the same time the reasons that give it the sanctity in some under-pocket beyond reach. Let Rationalism pick these secret pockets bare to evaluate their content.

Small as is our orbit, man has woven so much falsehood into the fabric of his mental cobweb that in tints of light and shade it baffles research even as the cosmic ray. Mystery pervades the stratosphere and beyond. An expand-

ing universe, spiral nebulae, stars and planets run forth as ever they do. While the birds sing, and the bees gather honey from the earthly flower. Our nearest ancestry toiled its time without bank accounts, cheques, exploitation, and savage exclusion from the fruits of nature. All that the visitor from Mars has on record of the storms that rose in the depths of the skull began when man lifted his head a few feet higher from the ground. We, that have forged an eminent consciousness, confound the issues of life now prevalent, as also mark that which is yet to come. To signify the import of the problem to us and our

successors, I collated at random a few of the more insistent questions. Shall we, as reasonable men and women, apply a conscious direction and control, try to answer them as waking men should, or will they be left to be carried on the winds, wherever they listeth, as if man was not born here? Our attitude towards the destiny of the race, the snapshot of our hazy pose, our blurred figure, the outcome of a shaking head, shall we present that as trophy to the Martian visitor, the token of pity to the poor confused Earth? While our senses last, no, an emphatic NO.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

A COLOSSAL FOLLY.

It is difficult to find adequate words to describe the reactionary Bill which Lord Dawson, M. D. has introduced in the House of Lords with the object of restricting the sale of contraceptives. If passed into law, it will make it illegal to sell them in any street or public place or by means of automatic machines placed in a public place; or to go to private premises for selling them except by request; to display them in or outside a shop; or to give information relating to them to any unmarried person under eighteen. The punishment ranges from a maximum of £ 20 fine for a first offence, and £ 50 for a second offence to a £ 50 fine and three months imprisonment for subsequent offences.

The Constructive Birth Control Society, presided over by Dr. Marie Stopes, comments on this Bill as follows: "The time chosen is extraordinary *four years after* the Bishops at Lambeth sanctioned the use of scientific contraceptives where

health demanded it, and at the very time when America, suffering beyond endurance the evils of Comstockery, is roused to intensive effort to throw it off".

Lord Dawson has been generally considered a birth-controller. Why then this attack on freedom regarding the sale of contraceptives? The Society mentioned above throws light on that: "Lord Dawson, far from being in close touch with the birth control movement as the public imagine, has kept strictly aloof from clinical work and experience, and this Bill was drawn up without reference to either of the leading Societies..... Both were kept in the dark until the last minute about the terms of this Bill,..... it was only actually printed and given to the birth control leaders a few days ago (at the end of January) and is to come up at once before the Lords early in February for the vital second reading, before we have time to muster opinion."

What prompted Lord Dawson to introduce a Bill which will prevent even doctors and nurses giving contraceptives to patients? It seems Dr. Marie Stopes induced some respectable chemists in London to stock and sell contraceptives, and now comes Lord Dawson with a Bill which will produce the same results as the similar law in France, viz. the encouragement of abortion and the use of possibly harmful means in the absence of harmless ones. In France some of these means at any rate are openly sold under the pretence of preventing venereal disease, but in England, even the prevention of disease is a crime. Does Lord Dawson really wish to increase the number of abortions?

Dr. Marie Stopes' Society further says: "How ill-acquainted Lord Dawson is with essentials may be gauged by the fact that clinical work has revealed that one of the very best of all contraceptives is pure olive oil; is that to be hidden from display in grocers' shops?.....One can buy in Woolworths a "hygienic packet" of five toy balloons for 3d., several of which in each packet are practical, adequate condoms and known to be and used as such. How is Lord Dawson proposing to deal with them?.....He will reply that his Bill does not touch any of these things—he may not mean to, but worded as it is *it does!*" They end their comment by saying: "If Lord Dawson persists in furthering his Bill he will be execrated the world over in his own time and remembered by posterity as the perpetrator of a bill known as "Dawson's Folly?"

Lord Dawson has struck a blow at the

sale of contraceptives in spite of the admitted fact that the principal cause of the diminution of birth-rates in Europe and the consequent reduction of poverty has been largely the free sale of these means. The automatic machine is a particularly useful idea, not only for people who are not bold enough to buy them in broad daylight, but also for people who may have forgotten to buy them. Is forgetfulness a sufficient reason for penalising them?

Then there is the clause about persons under 18. *The New Generation* remarks: "What earthly reason is there for distinguishing between persons under 18 and persons over it? Anybody can marry at 16, and puberty usually comes before that. Contraceptive information is useless to young couples unless they can get it before marriage. It is not likely that immediately after the wedding breakfast they will run off to hunt for contraceptive information. Such legislation would merely force babies on a number of young couples at a particularly unfit time."

That a man occupying the position of the King's physician should not see the inevitable consequences of the Bill he has drafted is hardly credible. Is there any mystery behind this? Has some occult influence been brought to bear on him? Is it a trick to benefit members of his profession by forcing people to go to doctors for contraceptives? To put it in legal jargon, a man must be presumed to have intended the natural consequences of his acts. I prefer to be charitable.

R. D. KARVE.

THE USUAL ANSWERS.

PERHAPS the least frequent of all the vague answers which greet the Atheist in his casual discussions on religion is the one which takes this form :—

- (4) "If we just fizzle out to nothing when we die, then I cannot see the use of living."

There are at least three good reasons why this answer is less frequently met with than others. The first is because it is less vaguely worded than most, and is therefore easier to tackle on common-sense lines. Religious persons do not, as a rule, like to involve themselves in arguments from which they cannot readily find a loophole of escape. And in using terms that are not vague or ambiguous, they run a more serious risk of having to admit defeat.

The second reason is that a belief in a so-called "future life" has no necessary connexion with a belief in a "God" of any sort. Spiritualists profess to be scientific investigators of the supernatural. Yet the "revelations" of their mediums, while full of detailed descriptions of persons and conditions to be found in the "higher planes" (descriptions which bear a remarkable resemblance to things on this plane), seldom, if ever, treat us to a clear picture of any deity, whether it be Allah, Osiris, the Holy Ghost or even God Almighty himself. This is a remarkable omission, which can only be explained by the supposition that Gods of any kind are not essential to a belief in a "future life." And it is further supported by the fact that one of the most popular varieties of this belief is the one known as metem-

psychosis or reincarnation. The belief that the "soul" returns to *earth* either in some human or animal body is still widespread, and it requires the presence of no Gods.

The third reason is this. When the believer expresses his belief in a continuance of life after death, he always implies that this "future life" will be, at least for him, more pleasant than the present one. If he is of a vengeful nature he will allow the possibility of a future "hell" or "purgatory." But this is never seriously regarded as a probable contingency in his own case. For it is obvious that if he really thought this "future life" would constitute an eternity of torment for him personally, he would be quite ready to listen to any arguments which might prove his belief to be wrong. Of course, there are a few, a very few, who believe that they are doomed to an eternal "hell" hereafter; but such persons are well on the way to, are already in, lunatic asylums. For the sane believer "hell" has long been a myth—or else it only applies to the other fellow.

In addition to the fact that it endangers two important religious tenets, namely, the need for a God and the existence of Hell, this answer is unpopular for other reasons. If it is treated analytically, it brings to light certain qualities in the believer which do not reflect very favourably upon his character. We have already observed its vengeful implications in those who include a "future life" of an unpleasant sort in their belief. Its egoistical element is disclosed when we discover that the

words "If *we* just fizzle out" are a camouflage for the words "If *I* just fizzle out."

The validity of using the first person plural is quite simply cancelled out by the fact that there are many people who find a great deal of use in living, yet who do not believe that they go on living after they are dead. Furthermore, when it comes down to dots, we find that the kind of "future life" which the believer has in mind is of a very circumscribed nature. A "heaven" in which he alone existed in magnificent solitude would not be at all to his liking. And a "heaven" which included all, or any, of the unpleasant people and things he has had to encounter in this life, would equally fail to come up to his ideals. What he really wants and believes in is a sort of select existence in which he can retain and enjoy only those things he personally wants to retain. Apart from these, the rest of creation could go hang for all he cared. Unfortunately this is exactly what every other believer hopes for—and it is obvious that they can't all have it their own way! But then, what believer ever bothers to work out the logical consequences of his beliefs?

Incidentally, too, one might observe that the universe existed for millions of years while our believer was non-existent. And he seldom exhibits any vast concern about what happened before he was born. Why, then, should he consider it so essential for him to be concerned about all time after he is dead?

Then, again one might ask, "If your future life is going to be so great an improvement on the present, why wait? It is simple enough to commit suicide comfortably these days." But to this practical suggestion the believer has

a very convenient reply. "We are taught that suicide is wicked." So although in his own mind he utterly repudiates the idea that he will go anywhere except to Heaven, he is unwilling to take the golden opportunity of getting there sooner than he need. So much so, indeed, that when his God (or whatever power he believes in) puts him in danger of dying a natural death, he rushes off for medical assistance to postpone the happy event! *Just like an Atheist!*

The Atheist is naturally not hoodwinked by this excuse that suicide is wicked. He realizes that it is no more than another of those religious contradictions which are intended, but which fail, to provide a loophole for illogical beliefs. No one in his normal senses wishes to commit suicide. Most people have a capacity for putting up with, or resisting, evil; and they seldom find life so intolerable as to wish to end it sooner than need be. So apart from its convenience as an excuse for the illogical belief in a "future life," there is no necessity whatever to make suicide a sin.

In addition to this, the grief exhibited by mourners who are firmly convinced that their dear ones have gone to Heaven, is another proof that the survivors have no real faith in their "life after death" theory. For if one truly loves a person who has died, then one's sorrow at a merely temporary, and comparatively brief, period of parting should be completely swallowed up in joy at the good fortune of the deceased. The fact that Christians mourn their dead with as great grief as Atheists is convincing evidence that they do not believe what they think they believe. Otherwise it can only be regarded as a sign of superlative egotism.

The statement that there is no use in living at all unless one goes on living for ever, is easily shown to be untrue on quite other grounds. For if the use, or value, of any action, emotion or event depends upon its capacity to last indefinitely, then no action, emotion or event can have any value at all in this life. Do we enjoy a hearty meal the less because we know beforehand that we cannot go on eating the same meal for ever? Do we refrain from going to see a good play because we know in advance that it will come to an end? Is not, indeed, our sole reason for refusing any pleasure or enjoyment based upon our knowledge that too much of a good thing inevitably palls in the long run? What rational grounds, then, are there for expecting that an everlasting life is going to prove less sickeningly monotonous than any other experience, pleasant or unpleasant, which is continued with too great frequency or at too great length?

The answer to this last question most often takes one of two similar forms. Either the believer declares that, when he dies, he does not think he will have had *his* fair share of the good things of life. Or he declares that there must be other people who will not have had *their* fair share. In these cases the "future life" is regarded as a sort of makeweight for the unpleasantnesses already experienced in this life. Be it noted that the "everlasting" nature of this "future life" is here allowed to drop into the background. But let that pass. For whichever answer is favoured, the argument remains the same. And the second form, thought it has the appearance of altruism, is in fact as much a cloak for laziness as the first.

In the first place, how can anyone show what exactly *his* fair share of joys should be? Secondly, even if he could prove that he had not had his fair share now, how can he prove that he will not have had it—and perhaps more—when he comes to die? The fact is that this hope for good things after death is nothing more than a cover for slovenly procrastination in the present. A man is either satisfied with his conditions and content to enjoy them without worry about a dim and dubious future; or else, if he is really dissatisfied he would not calmly sit down under his calamities in the fatuous hope of an early release by death. He would get to work and do something about it.

As for his pseudo-altruism and concern for other people, what is this in reality but sheer callousness and indifference? For, if everything is going to be put right for everybody in that wonderful "hereafter," then what valid reason can there be for feeling uncomfortable about the unfairness and injustices of *this* life? If, on the other hand, the hardships of others are really such a matter of concern to the believer, then he would not spend a moment in theorising or preaching about a makeweight Heaven—he would set to at once and do his utmost to mitigate them here and now.

The truth is that from whatever point of view one regards the belief in a "future life," its logical and inevitable results are the encouragement of egotism, indolence, indifference and even sadism. The whole history of the Christian religion bears witness to this. As a theory this belief is completely lacking in evidence. As a matter of practice it is not

only useless, but pernicious. As a matter of logic it is absurd. For since "death" means the "end, or cessation, of life," the phrase "life after death" is a pure contradiction in terms, which is as non-

sensical and meaningless as saying that a car can travel "up a hill downwards," or that the "end of a story is at the beginning."

C. S. FRASER.
in the *Freethinker*.

FREETHOUGHT AND TO-DAY.

ONE of my valued correspondents, writing to congratulate me on the publication of *Bradlaugh and Ingersoll*, thought that opportunities for the display of heroism were not so great to-day as in Bradlaugh's time. I do not agree with this, although it is an opinion that is, I fancy, widely held. I would prefer to put it that the opportunities for the same kind of heroism are not so general to-day, but the opportunities for a rarer kind of courage, so far as Freethought is concerned, are greater to-day than ever they were. A hundred years ago Freethought was still largely fighting for the right of expression, and against an enemy that showed no hesitation in avowing the conviction that open antagonism to religious ideas should and ought to be suppressed. Men were openly threatened with severe consequences if they opposed religion, and the older reading of the blasphemy laws was still in operation. To-day the legal, and even the general, right openly to criticize religion is publicly admitted, although it may privately be denied. And the distinction between these two situations is one of which my correspondent had evidently lost sight. I do not think that there are fewer opportunities for fighting than there were in the height of the Bradlaugh struggle, it is only that to-day the fight has changed in form, and this

change calls for a rarer and actually stronger type of character.

The distinction is really that between open and disguised coercion. The former creates antagonism and rouses to resistance. Threaten a man with physical violence or offer an open bribe to secure conformity, and there is a tendency to resist. But concede the right to free thought and free speech in theory, while denying it in practice, and let this denial take, not the form of openly applied force, but the force of a social boycott, or inability to gain a place in the public eye—in the press, in Parliament, or the council chamber, or the loss of promotion in one or another branch of the civil service, and for one who will submit in the first case you have twenty who will submit in the latter.

* * *

A Demoralizing Process.

There is a still further difference of consequence in two cases. There is no necessary humiliation in submission to openly applied force. There is none in a man not speaking because a gang of ruffians threatens to break his neck if he does. That situation arouses only feelings of contempt for the bullies. A soldier is not humiliated because he surrenders to a superior force, and when there is no ulterior purpose served by

his dying at his post. But the man who submits to coercion for fear of a loss of social prestige, or to gain social distinction, is in a different position. In the first set of circumstances he yields to the bully without, and his whole nature resents the necessity. In the second, he has to deal with his own sense of right and justice, and that is a very different business. It is not the bully without, but the "God" within, with whom he has to deal. And he does this by declining to recognize his own motives. He does not say, as he would in submitting to openly applied force, "I am submitting because it is hopeless to resist." He excuses his submission, rationalizes his weakness, and by justifying it acts as a defender of a system he should seek to destroy. The champions of religion have been taught by experience that it is far easier to buy the silence of opponents than it is to avert opposition by open intolerance. I do not agree with those who say that the character of Freethinkers is not what it was. The truth is rather that it requires a finer fighting type than it did a century ago. The power of social bribery requires a stronger moral fibre for resistance than does the oppression that is exercised through judge and gaoler.

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Mass Opinion.

* There are other obstacles to the growth of genuine Freethinking which, while they are not new in the world's history, exist in a very aggravated form today. Chief among these is one that was dealt with by Mr. Howard Whitehouse, at the Educational Associations, Conference at University College the other day. His speech dealt with the manufacture of

mass opinion, and I read Mr. Whitehouse's address with the greater pleasure, since it travelled over much the same lines as an article of mine on the same topic written some time ago. Control by mass opinion is, of course, nothing new in history. For many centuries it indicated the main policy of the Christian Church. Individual thinking was discouraged, and by a dual process of eliminating the intellectually wayward, and a method of control which aimed at an absolute uniformity of opinion, the Church hoped to create a united and perpetual Christian society. Now that this has been given up as hopeless we see the same thing taken up by Italy, Russia, Germany, and some other smaller States. In addition, the course of our political development, the growth of the newspaper press, and the general tendency of education, has transferred this policy of making mass opinion from the religious to the political sphere. In politics, no matter what the party, from Communist to Conservative, the aim is to provide the electorate with a number of parrot-like cries which may be voiced whenever the particular political machine in which they believe sounds the note for their use. "The downtrodden proletariat" is as effective with one group as "For King and Country" is with another, and on the face of it each indicates about the same degree of understanding. The newspaper have for long learned the value of dosing the public with a repetition of phrases, and the development of our national educational systems, whether in elementary or in the large public schools, turns out the same mass opinion, which bears a far greater tribute to the education given than to the understanding that is developed. The last war was fought on the

strength of these parrot-technics, and in the next war whenever it comes, we shall find the same machinery working at full pressure. "National Unity" has come to mean little more than a shouting together of the same "slogans" on the same occasion.

There is, however, one new feature in the situation. Hitherto intolerance has acted with a certain shame-facedness. To-day it is bolder and claims the status of a first principle. The "State" or its synonym "the Country," has usurped the place of God and the Church. Man does not exist for the greater Glory of God, he exists for the greater glory of the State. The traitor is not merely the man who *acts*, he is the man who *thinks* contrary to orders. That is at least the temporary philosophy of Russia, it is the announced permanent philosophy of both Germany and Italy and in our own country we have the Fascist movement, which only awaits the opportunity to become as brutal and as intolerant, and as uncivilized as Fascism is in other countries. That is the worst of slogans. They are not to make people reflect, they make no appeal to intelligence, they have no room for discussion, and therefore no place for freedom of thought. They are the voice of the pack, the unthinking howl of the herd, and have no other purpose than to set the unreflective passions of a crowd working towards a given end. This is so clearly recognized in Germany that Hitler has now announced that the number of young men and women who are to be admitted to the higher education courses is to be severely restricted, even when the candidates are among his own Nazi followers. That is more than logical, it is necessary if Fascism in any of its forms is to survive. Its followers

might well paraphrase Gambetta and cry "Intelligence, free, unfettered intelligence, that is the enemy."

* * *

The Outlook.

I do not think, then, that Freethought is less robust than it was. The courage demanded to-day is partly of a different kind, and so far as the required courage is different it is manifested on a higher level, because it has to resist a more insidious attack, one which fewer are able to resist. The more ostensibly liberal religion becomes, the greater the inducement for many to purchase social ease, and perhaps social distinction, by ceasing to attack the "infamous." There is, of course, an attack which comes in the old form—the attack against freedom of thought and speech in the countries I have named, and which has many advocates in this country. And there are many signs that they who really value individual intellectual independence may have, in this country, their courage put to the test in the not distant future.

But of that I have no very great fear—at least so far as Freethought is concerned. A very shrewd observer—a German, one who had left his country, not for his country's good, but for his own, said to me recently that the Nazi regime was one foredoomed to a progressive deterioration. At the outset it is conceivable that a large number of people, anxious for improvement, may seize on a barbarous thing such as Hitlerism, or some other dictatorship as offering a probable way out of their difficulties. Even the brutalities incident to this regime may be "rationalized" just as the Church rationalized the brutalities that were practiced under its rule, and in its name. But the brutalities, the persecution

involved gradually disgusts the better character, and the dictatorship is reduced to selecting a progressively lower type to carry out its decrees. A dictatorship, a tyranny, carries within it the seeds of its own dissolution. It deteriorates as rapidly as an army that is not able to replenish its manhood by contact with social life. I believe that it is this cause, partly, at least, that led to the breakdown of Church rule. It was so antagonistic to the fundamentally better feelings of men that it had to depend for maintenance upon a progressively lower type of character, while all along it was filling the ranks of its opponents with those

who were morally and intellectually superior.

Finally, it may be that to the more thoughtful and the more courageous in the Freethought ranks the present situation will awaken the conviction that we have been taking our freedom too much for granted. It is neither so great nor so secure as many have imagined. Some few legal injustices have been removed, but the social injustices remain, and there are greater inducements to compromise and actual hypocrisy. It may be that a very strenuous fight lies before us, not to make a greater advance, but to retain what has already been won.

CHAPMAN COHEN.
in "The Freethinker."

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

The daily papers announced on April 21st that a Miss Batten was attempting a solo flight from England to Australia. For good luck, it was announced, she carried a piece of bone of a lion, a small silk Union Jack, and the badge of St. Christopher—the newly

elected patron of Aviators. On April the 22nd the same papers announced that she crashed in darkness near Rome, the machine was wrecked and the poor woman received minor injuries. It is certainly an irony of fate that she crashed near Rome which, of

all places, should have afforded her the special protection of St. Christopher whom the Pope has recently elected as the patron of Aviators. Out of pure regard for the Pope, St. Christopher should have been more considerate. Perhaps it was that piece of lion's bone that upset St. Christopher. It was certainly an act of impiety on the part of Miss Batten to associate such a mascot—probably the gift of an African witch doctor, with the badge of a Christian saint blessed by the Pope. Miss Batten probably never thought of that, and her levity nearly cost her her life. People who believe in charms, mascots, and amulets ought to treat these things with the seriousness they deserve, especially when they have been blessed by a representative of God on Earth.

* * *

A wag who must have felt some bitterness in his heart gave vent to the following expression:—"In this irrational world, the champions of their own prejudices masquerading as guardians of the public good will always be with us." One suspects that an Englishman must have said this, for in his country these guardians of the public good are as numerous as tabby cats in a city. For the good of the public they interfere with everything—Sunday cinemas, lotteries, wireless broadcasting, the press, education, birth-control, divorce, marriage, and even fashion.

* * *

"A Bleeding Crucifix."

"After examination, the Bishop of Asti, Italy, has publicly declared the truth of the facts, and their supernatural character in connection with an incident which occurred at Asti, between August 11 and September 27, 1933.

A plaster Crucifix hung on the walls of the Hospice of Saint Clare at Asti. A poor woman, Maria Tartaglino, who had been a suffering inmate of this institution for many years, was kneeling in prayer before the Crucifix, when she beheld the chest of the figure of Our Divine Lord heave, and the following words were addressed to her by Christ; "See, my daughter, to what a state sacrileges have reduced Me...completely renewing My Passion."

Then the side of the figure on the Cross opened, and from it flowed blood. It also flowed from the hands and feet, as well as slightly from the mouth.

Eleven witnesses—amongst whom were five priests and four nuns—were present and saw the blood from the Crucifix flow and congeal. At the desire of the Bishop of Asti, the Crucifix and the congealed blood were submitted to all the analyses of modern science, radioscopic and radiographic. The examination of the blood by spectral and chemical analyses was confided to the Institute of Legal Medicine at the University of Turin, and its scientists, concluded from all the evidence that the substance was blood, and human blood.

The unanimity of witnesses decided the Bishop to submit the matter to an ecclesiastical tribunal, which gave its decree on February 24 of the present year. Accordingly the Bishop has ordered that the miraculous Crucifix should be solemnly enthroned in the Church of St. Joseph at Asti, which was done with much solemnity on March 9."

* * *

The above recently appeared in a Bombay religious Journal. On reading this one must really say that "the ways

of God are indeed mysterious." Why such a startling miracle should happen in an out of the way place like Asti in Italy and before a poor unknown, sickly woman is difficult to say? Imagine a God complaining to a poor, unknown woman when the world is still full of queens, princesses, and noble ladies! There are millions of crucifixes in the world. They are to be found in big cities like London, Paris, Rome, New York and elsewhere. Yet they are dumb like rocks in such places and exhibit no miracle. In Asti they have not only a bleeding clay crucifix but a talking one too! Such a wonderful piece of news, attested by eleven witnesses, four of whom were nuns and five were priests, should have spread all over the world like wild fire, and millions should have rushed to Asti to witness the occurrence especially as it lasted forty six days.

* * *

The world does not appear to have been stirred by this miraculous event, and such unheard of indifference really deserves the bitter complaint of a god. One can imagine the mortification of Christ that people did not make haste to flock to Asti to behold the great marvel. Perhaps it was the extreme modesty with which the whole affair has been conducted that was responsible for this indifference. It is certainly striking that such a wonder which lasted forty six days, should have been witnessed by only eleven persons of whom five were priests and four nuns. Now that the worthy Bishop of the locality has enthroned the miraculous crucifix with much solemnity, it is to be hoped that people will soon flock there and make the church where the crucifix is to be found, famous.

It would be very impious to believe that the scientists of Legal Medicine at

the University of Turin did not, themselves, draw the blood from that clay figure, did not guard themselves against imposture and did not take every step to make sure that it was not one of those pious frauds for which Italy was notorious in the past. We hope that scoffers will not say that such expedients are often resorted to to bolster up a dying creed. They may, of course, say that such tricks *pour epater les imbeciles* were frequently done in the past in the interest of Faith. We are assured by saintly priests that such is no longer the case. Anyhow, though it is well known that bleeding crucifixes were common enough in days gone by, a talking crucifix, especially one which heaves and makes a bitter complaint, is surely a new wonder that ought to convince any stiff necked unbelievers.

* * *

It is sometime asked:—"If God has spoken why is Nature silent"? If the reports we have heard are to be relied upon, it would appear that nature is not going to remain silent any longer. The Virgin Mary, who seems to have abandoned her beloved France for new pastures, is now frequently appearing to peasants in Belgium and requests them to build Churches on the sites where she appeared to them. One such place in Flanders has already become famous and threatens to be a serious competitor to Lourdes. There is surely some unrest in heaven and old planet Earth is again attracting the attention of the divine Government. Mr. Gandhi recognized this after the Bihar earthquake, and several priests think they can clearly discern the hand of God in events of recent happening. Apparitions are getting frequent and now a bleeding crucifix begins to talk. In the country of the present

writer, quite recently, a picture of the Holy Face in a Church began to wink at a few girls. The matter was soon reported. A few nuns, and a old man, and a number of school girls were quite convinced that the Holy Face was trying to communicate some signs. Unfortunately the news spread rapidly and a number of journalists, doctors, lawyers and others came to see the wonderful happenings. Nothing happened; the Holy face resolutely refused to manifest itself before such a crowd of sinners who had winked at one another when they heard the news. The ways of God are indeed mysterious.

* * * *

The last Mohorrum festival has been responsible for a good deal of bloodshed in many parts of India. Serious riots were reported from many places which show that the antagonism between Hindus and Mahommedans on religious questions in India is as keen as ever. It is really deplorable that such is the case and that no effort is made, by the so-called leaders of these communities to enlighten these people and to show them that their supposed grievances are due to pure ignorance. The ignorance of the masses in India is simply awful. It is remarkable that these people, who are generally peaceful and will put up with many things, become like maniacs under the stress of religious excitement.

Unfortunately in this country many praise these deluded people for their religious staunchness, and few have the courage to tell them that all their troubles are due to their ignorance and bigotry. Only a few days ago we heard that a well-known Mahommedan leader went to the Moplah country and praised these people for their great attachment to reli-

gion! When such things go on in India it is hopeless to expect a diminution of fanaticism among the masses.

* * *

It was reported that in Lahore during the last Mohorrum procession a number of young man belonging to the Shiah community inflicted serious injuries on themselves necessitating their removal to hospital. This, probably, occurred during the performances of the *Mattam* ceremony which consists in beating one's breast and other parts of the body until one drops senseless. This is done to mark one's extreme grief at the remembrance of the sad death of Iman Hussein who, with his party, was cut to pieces at Kerbella by Yezdiz about 1300 years ago. It is stated that in Persia many people every year beat themselves to death during this strange performance, and their act of self immolation is much admired. As is well known, the Shiahs of Persia observe the anniversary of the death of Hussein in a very tragic manner. During the ten days that the Mohorrum festival lasts they give themselves to uncontrollable grief and every one vies with each other to show the greatest sorrow. All dress in black during that period, and for days after, and men and women will howl with grief for hours until they are exhausted. To raise their feelings to the highest pitch, they must hear for ten nights from fiery preachers the harrowing details, with of course much exaggeration, of the sad death of Hussein and his followers.

This general mourning with the excesses it gives rise to is a very interesting question for psychologists, showing as it does what suggestion, imagination, and imitation can cause people to do under the influence of religious excitement and

emotion. One is inclined to believe that much of this excitement is stimulated by the great admiration of the onlookers who believe this to be a proof of great piety.

* * *

There is no doubt that the desire to imitate, to be praised and to be admired, apart from what is called a real vocational feeling, induces many young men and women to embrace a religious life. Many young men and young women in this country are attracted to the priesthood and nunhood by certain well known influences created by their environment more than by actual serious belief. Girls, here, at a certain age, are very much disposed to admire nuns. In the atmosphere in which they live they look upon the

nuns as privileged beings, whose piety is much admired and whose life is so holy. The peculiar garb which the nun assumes interests them immensely and they also long to don this and win the approbation and admiration of the community. Many young men of a showy disposition imagine the life of the priest to be very attractive. For certain minds, the idea that during ceremonies they are the cynosure of the public especially of the women folk, is irresistible. To perform before the public, is the desire of their life, and they think it a great reward indeed to do that even if for that they should have to become priests. Such are the curious traits of human nature.

RATIONALISM AND RELIGION IN INDIA

Believers in religion here, it matters not what creed they belong to, are fond of asserting that their faith is of a transcendental nature, a gift from above, and that all the theories and facts of science, which are contradictory to the principles on which their faith is based, are futile against it. Such a ridiculous assertion is made by the devotees of all religions. The Jews, the Christians, the Mahomedans, the Hindus, and even the Parsis, though in a microscopic number, claim that faith is a divine gift, and that it is not the mission of Rationalism to disturb their cherished beliefs. It is not, of course, the mission of Rationalism to convert any body. No Rationalist, would feel any pleasure to see an individual, half-baked in the study of Rationalism, proclaiming at large that he is one, while, owing to defective education, he is liable to make an

ass of himself at the slightest opportunity. We hold that no man can become a Rationalist unless he has the necessary intellectual equipment to become one. By intellectual equipment we certainly do not mean that only the Rationalists are intellectual people and all others are fools. We mean nothing of the kind. There are many highly intellectual people who are not Rationalists, but believe in some supernatural mysteries or other. We believe that these people's education has been generally one-sided; something has been neglected. They may have received a fine classical education, may be well versed in languages, mathematics and other branches of knowledge, may be excellently trained for the professional career they have adopted, but something has been neglected which renders them incapable of taking all into

consideration to form a lucid judgment on the scheme of things, and to draw the logical and rational conclusion that only sound thinking enables one to do.

In most cases it will be seen that such people have not received an all round scientific education, which alone could help them to have a clear idea of the many problems which must be intelligently understood before one can claim to have properly grasped the philosophy of Rationalism. Let us suppose that it is necessary to discuss the theory of the evolution of the Cosmos with a person who has not the slightest idea of Astronomy and Astrophysics. It may be a waste of time to do so, and such a person may not fall in line with the view of Rationalism that the Universe did not come into existence all of a sudden by a creative fiat. It may equally be a waste of time to discuss the question of the existence of the soul, survival after death, etc., with a person who has no knowledge of biology. As a matter of fact, there are many persons who are very competent in some departments of science only, for instance, in physics without knowing anything of biology. Such people arguing on the question of the existence of the soul very often adopt a line which no competent biologist will do. They will talk of a mysterious vital principle to account for the phenomenon of life which a biologist does not find necessary to do. They will seriously discuss the possibility of mind or consciousness surviving the dissolution of the brain which a biologist will not dare assert. And so on, one finds that a defective knowledge of a branch of science in a person may lead to a confusion of thought in a discussion with another who is thoroughly versed in it, and no agreement between the two can be reached.

If such is the case among well educated people how can anybody talk of Rationalists trying to make converts? The very idea is absurd. All that Rationalism expects is that people of an inquiring turn of mind, sincere seekers after truth, may be encouraged to study things for themselves, to carefully consider both sides of the question, and to form a scientific habit of mind so that their conviction and beliefs may rest on such a solid foundation that is proof against errors and fallacies. It is only people who are temperamentally fitted to do so, people who are free from bias, prejudice and bigotry, people who are mentally active and diligent who may be expected to take an interest in Rationalism. Is the common herd capable of doing this? People who talk of their faith being above reason have not the slightest idea of what Rationalism is or what it stands for: they belong to this common herd and they have no choice but to remain where they are tethered. The pride of such people is that the majority all over the world believe in some sort of religion. They look upon this as the natural disposition of man, and think that this alone indicates that religion is indispensable to mankind. Such people are not intelligent enough to understand that the world has slumbered for thousand of years in ignorance and that it is only recently that general education has begun to spread. Take the case of Europe. For centuries only a few could read and write; the great majority was steeped in the darkest ignorance and were therefore the victims of the grossest superstitions one could imagine. Is it any wonder that in such a condition religion flourished like the bay tree? All this shows what a long start religion has had over Rationalism which could

only come into existence with the advancement of knowledge.

Even now, ignorance still rules the world. In the West, the vast majority only know the three R's and a good number is still illiterate. In Asia and Africa the vast majority is illiterate; a small number can read and write and only a few thousands can be said to be very highly educated. Yet, in spite of this, in spite of the fact that Rationalism did not exist, so to speak, two hundred years ago, it is remarkable how it has spread among people competent to understand it. To day, in the West most highly educated people are more or less Rationalists, and even those who would not accept the term to denote their belief cannot be said to be believers in the sense that their forbears were. Many, who have not altogether abandoned Christianity, no longer believe in its supernatural claims, though they stick to its ethical doctrines. The same phenomenon is seen in other religions, so that one may say without fear of contradiction that wherever one goes one sees that the more the people are learned the less they are orthodox, and the more they are ignorant the more they are religious. It is for thoughtful people to realize what is in store for religion if education is going to spread unhampered and unfettered. Education has become such a serious menace to religion that one of the greatest concerns of religious teachers is to secure the education of the young. In this they have been pretty successful so far. There is no doubt that religious schools and colleges may, for sometime to come, greatly obstruct the course of sound, real education and keep people who are educated in them under the sway of the Churches. This sort of thing, however, cannot last for ever.

People cannot always be deceived. Already certain countries in Europe have recognized that to lessen the influence of priests on people it is necessary to forbid religious schools to teach the young. In France "les ecoles laiques" have mostly replaced the religious schools; in Spain it is hoped that such will be the case before long. Russia is conducting a wonderful experiment in the respect which is bound to regenerate that country. They have made great progress in education in Turkey, and in England, despite the power of the Church, steady pressure is being made to free the schools from the domination of the clergy.

Here, in India, the prospects are not so promising. The schools are mostly in the hands of the missionaries, and the Government have reason to praise them for doing what they themselves cannot do. People here rightly recognize that were it not for these missionaries, most probably they would have received no education at all, and many say that a defective education is better than no education at all. It must also be said that for many here the environment and circumstances are not favourable yet for the establishment of non-religious schools. Take the case of the Christians as an instance. Most of the Roman Catholics in India are descended from people who were converted by the most bigoted fanatics of Europe—the Portuguese and Spaniards.

In a country where conservative habits of the people are deep rooted, and things move slowly, the environment created by these early Christian Missionaries has hardly been changed. It is only now that some of these people have begun to get a smattering of knowledge. The last census shows that 75% of the Roman Catholics in India are still illiterate. It is

only natural that such people should look upon Christianity as a wonderful thing, considering that, so far as they are concerned, it has certainly changed their social status and their outlook on life. This explains why priests who have been expelled from their countries in Europe hurry to India, knowing full well that they will receive a hearty welcome here. For a long time to come it is possible that they will find India a paradise on earth until the inevitable takes place—when Rationalism will begin to penetrate among these Christians and show them how they have lagged behind in the intellectual advances of mankind by their foolish delusion that their Church is built up on an impregnable rock and so forth and that only their priests can teach the truth.

As far as the Mahomedans are concerned it must be admitted that the

outlook is still very gloomy. Of all communities in India they are the most backward intellectually. The only thing that seems to interest them immensely is their religion and it is a policy among their more enlightened leaders to encourage them to look upon religion as the only thing that matters in life. Rationalism is more likely to make progress among highly educated Hindus and Parsis. With all these difficulties before it, the Rationalist Association of India has been formed to invite thoughtful and sincere people to consider the great benefit that sane and right thinking can confer on a country like India. The task is worth trying though the work, as our worthy President once said, is going to be a tremendous uphill affair. Resolute and determined workers are not afraid of it.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

RATIONALISM AND THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

(X. Essence and Form.)

While moral standards are constantly in the state of flux, and sociology presents an ever-changing picture of human evolution, it is well to investigate whether behind these variable forms of individual and collective life, there runs a principle of continuity, a thread that pierces into the manifold gems of human achievement, (*Sut্রে মানি গাণা ইব, cf. Gita, VII, 7.*) That the Gita is the bedrock of Sanatana Dharma, no one who may have an honest claim to put forth on that side will deny. The claim is expressly made when Arjuna chants the praise (XI, 18)

*Tvam avyaya saswata dharma gopta
Sanatana stvam purusho matome.*

(Thou art the guardian of the indestructible, eternal Law, the immemorial man art thou, to my reckoning.) And where does this principle of immemorial humanity rest? Wherein lies the changeless Dharma, when we are aware of the fleeting phases of moral and social evolution? Not certainly in the strict injunction to follow up the Karmic path enjoined in the Vedas; though, the Gita does not denounce the observance of ritual, but on the other hand such observances are held to purify the intelligence. (see XVIII, 6.)

Yegna dana tapah karma na tyajyam
karya mevatat

Yegno danam tapascheiva pavanami
manishinam.

(Sacrifices, gifts, and austerities ought not to be left out, but, must be performed. They are the purifiers of the intelligent Pundits.)

One has a hazy suggestion about this stanza, that the ritualistic offerings of sacrifice, and charity are held forth as brain-softeners or curatives to relax the overstrained brain-cells of speculative logicians engaged in the intellectual pursuit of tracing out the priority rights between the seed and the tree, between the First Cause and Its Cause. "*Pawana-ni manishinam*" (purify the wise pundits) reads like a significant utterance; the man of average understanding who does not trouble himself in intellectual doubt does not stand to gain much by these observances. But, that is another issue.

That the Gita treads the path of reform, nay, it even revolutionised pre-existing conceptions of duty and life, it does not benefit the most ardent Sanatanist to deny. The real service rendered by the Gita to Hindu religious life may, on the other hand be held to consist in its having focussed attention on the essentials and thorough exclusion of all tendencies to vedic formalism.

It sets its face against those who pretend to acquire merit by obedience to Vedic Word. It does not countenance Midhyachara (III, 6) the hypocrite who controls his action, but whose mind is not turned away from the objects of sense; and it sees no worth in a sacrifice linked to consideration or self-glorification. (Dambhardham, XVII, 12.) Nor

may it be accused of glazing the sharp antithesis that divides the two paths of Gnana (Knowledge) and Karma (action) for it expressly refers to the dualism in III, 3, and XVIII. 3, and other places and discussing the relative merits relied on by the votaries of either mode of thought proceeds to lay down the standard. And that standard is the progressive ideal which while proceeding from the Vedic texts, travels farther from them. (Sabda Brahmati vartate, Cf. VI, 44). The reason for transcending the Vedas is not also left in doubt.

Trigunya vishaya veda nistraigunye
bhava Arjuna

Nirdvandve nitya satvasthe niryoga
kshema atmavan (II, 45)

(The vedas are concerned with the three qualities, all of which, Oh, Arjuna, you ought to get over. Beyond the pairs of opposites, ever seated in purity, regardless of acquisition or retention of any kind of selfish possessions, you should not care for the fruits promised in the Vedas to these Gunas, or qualities.)

Thus the other wordly pleasures of swarga (paradise) set out in the flowery speech (II, 42, Pushpitam Vacham) of those that rejoice in the letter of the Vedas are not recommended as the fit object of attainment hereafter (Yoga) nor is one expected to feel nervous over the prospect of losing the world's goods already had (Kshema).

Why, the declaration is expressly made, the challenge is plainly given that of all the rambling mandates emanating from the Vedas, one has the right (and the obligation?) to pick and choose.

Yavanardha udapane sarvatah samp-
ludodake

Tavan Sarveshu Vedeshu Brahmanasya
vijanatah. (II, 46)

(Whether in the tank or from a vast lake, only so much water as is needed will be taken. Even so from all the Vedas, should the wise one derive the relative enlightenment or utility.)

The central teaching of the Gita in the matter of such utility of knowledge (Gnana) is the escape from the pairs of opposites, pain pleasure &c. and of action (Karma) through a severe detachment from the fruit thereof. The vehicle that enables one to reach the goal is Yoga (equipoise). Samatvam yoga uchyate: equilibrium in success and failure is called Yoga (II, 48.) This is skill in action. (Yogah karma sukausalam, II, 50.) Amid the manifold songs, and hymns of diverse metre, and the reasonings of the Brahmasutras, that have occupied themselves with the treatment of life and knowledge, (see, XIII, 3) there is unity and continuity that the Bhagavad Gita brings out. Yoga is the watchword. All that is said in the Vedas regarding the merits attaching to sacrifices, charity and austerity the Yogi knows. And having known, he attains the supreme seat which is at the root of them all, which surpasseth them and which is different, from all of them, in that it is the essence, while the rest are merely formulary.

Yogi param sthana mupaiti chadyam
(VIII, 28.)

The superior prerogative of the Yogi is unmistakable. What cannot be attained by the knowledge of the Vedas, by Tapas, by charity, and by sacrificial ritual, he is capable of through his devotion. The reality which is a principle concealed from their view exposes in all its splendour of universal appeal before the (divya-chakshus) higher vision (XI, 53) also, 42).

There is a physical index to the recognition of the Yogi, who is able to stand equipoised between the external

contacts of pleasure and pain, and who is not exalted by success nor depressed in failure, but takes equal interest in praise and blame. As the peep-hole of ancient science the description of Arjuna as Savya-Sachin opens up a vista stretching out to the borders of modern psychology. One who is capable of using the left-hand as much as the right, gives equal exercise to the right cerebral hemisphere as for the left. In most others, to whom the right arm is the main strength, brain matter is left-sided development, the right area not being put to adequate use. Man has thus gone on arresting the harmonious and simultaneous stimulation of both the cerebral sides, with perhaps the necessary repercussions on his mental life in the way of developing the equipoise, needed for Yoga. If ambidexterity has much to do with the maintenance of mental equilibrium, its discovery by the date when the Bhagavad-Gita must have been composed (XI, 33) would be a flattering commentary on the scientific achievements of the age in the physical side. F. W. H. Myers made a modest claim in his book "Human Personality. Vol. I, p. 85 (1903) that "there was somewhat more of dextro-cerebral capacity than in the mass of mankind" in some forms of genius like the *calculating boy*. Physiological psychology has advanced considerably during the last three decades. One should derive greater delight from thinking on Arjuna as a character of fiction that one might lift the poetry of Vyasa (whichever he may be) to the modern scientific level, than relegate the Savya-Sachin to the prose of history, and Vyasa his mere chronicler. For after all between the two, the poet is the better Yogi than the history-recorder, whatever the claimants for the historicity of Jesus might say.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

THE FRENCH VIEW OF RELIGIOUS NEUTRALITY

Miss Eleanor Reid, student at McGill University, writes in *Canadian Student*:-

There was one discovery which came as a distinct shock to me during my year in France. I had known many people who professed no religion and held Christianity in scorn. But all these had been given some religious training in their youth, whether Christian—Protestant or Catholic,—or Jewish. Since my Mission Band days I had been aware also that, "There are many thousands who have never heard His name," and who worship idols and are very uncivilized people. This idea had later been altered to conceive of these people as of a civilization and culture very different from ours, and hence of a quite different religious background.

But last year I found some new friends, people whom I came to admire as much as any I had ever known, among well-educated people of Western civilization and culture, like myself, who not only did not believe in Christianity, but had never, even in childhood, been instructed in any religious faith. No doubt I had known before that such existed; but I had never realized the fact with all the force with which it was revealed to me in France. What is more, it was these people, as opposed to the Christians (Roman Catholics) of the community, who held the same ideals as I in the fields of social justice and international peace and co-operation.

I spent the year in a provincial Girls' Normal School, as English Assistant, teaching girls aged 16 to 20, who were being trained to teach in the rural primary schools. My first surprise came

at seeing no more than five or six girls of the sixty odd in the schools go out to Mass on Sunday morning; at learning that very few if any had ever read the Bible; and at other such instances which quickly showed me that only a very small proportion of the students had any of the background that either a Roman Catholic or a Protestant upbringing would have given them.

As time went on, and I took part in many of the activities of the school, followed the courses in Education given by the Directrice, and observed the play of group antagonisms in the town, I became increasingly aware of the situation illustrated by this fact which had come to my attention. It was well characterized by the educational system, which I was naturally in a very good position to observe.

The striking characteristic of the French education is its division into two distinct systems, designated by the terms primary and secondary. The secondary system is carried over from the traditional educational set-up, that is, probably, from the institutions of the Revolution and Napoleon I, the important thing being that it was never intended as education for the masses. The system of primary schools, on the other hand, is the outcome of the struggle on the part of the working and peasant classes,—"*le peuple*"—for education that should be free and compulsory for all, and, as a logical corollary, politically and religiously neutral.

This last provision took on colour from the situation especially prevalent in France, where practically all education

had been carried on by the Catholic Church for centuries, except for the occasional breaks caused by the revolutions of the hundred years preceding the enactment of the present education laws. Religious neutrality had to fight a bitter battle to become law, and consequently took on more and more positive elements as its proponents added to their ammunition of logic and moral support.

The history of a word will illustrate this evolution. The system established was that of the "Ecole laïque" which would be translated as the non-religious or secular school. In the course of the last half-century, this word "laïque" has taken on a meaning which I find it impossible to translate by any single word in English, since it now expresses something in the nature of a new religion or system of morals which has been developed by the defendants of this feature of the new educational system. So prolonged and vigorous and bitter has been the opposition that those who uphold the system have been led further and further to realize and formulate the idealism which lies behind their efforts.

And so I saw it manifested; in the Directrice, a woman of some forty years' experience in education, a fine teacher, a person of high principles and ideals, devoted heart, soul, and reason to the cause "laïque"; in my friend S—, a young teacher with all the idealism of youth, founded on a conception of life which will support that idealism at a high pitch for a long time to come; in the normal students, who in their three years under the influence of such a person as the Directrice could not fail to imbibe that pressing sense of mission which is an essential part of the "morale laïque."

For that is the name of what may in a sense be called the new religion, growing out of the 19th century "reformation," in France. The principles of the "morale laïque" have their prescribed place in the programme of studies to be taught in the primary schools. It was really a moving experience to listen to the Directrice, whose last teaching year it was, lecture for the last time on a subject so close to her heart as this one, on which she had expended a great part of her energy during her life as a teacher. When I expressed my interest in the subject to her later, she explained to me that she had had to be very careful in speaking of this matter to the girls, for the problem was to make sufficiently clear the teacher's high responsibility, both negative and positive, in the "enseignement laïque," without hurting or arousing the antagonism of the few "croyantes" in the class.

Set forth as they were in the very rational and logical style characteristic of French teaching, I think extracts from my notes on these lectures can best explain the position taken by the "laïque."

(On the religious neutrality of the schools.)

I. The primary public school in France is neutral as to religious confession; this means,

1. It teaches no religion.
2. It does not have prayers repeated or catechism learned.
3. The school can have no religious emblem.
4. Entrance to the school is forbidden to the clergy of any religion.
5. The teacher may not hold any religious function such as chorist, bell-ringer, or churchwarden.

6. The primary public school teaches "la morale laïque."

7. The school is closed one day per week—Thursday—to enable the children to receive religious education. In boarding schools the pupils receive all facilities for fulfilling their religious duties according to the wishes of their families. Pupils who are taking their first communion have leave of absence during the week of retirement which precedes the ceremony.

II. The reasons for this school neutrality.

1. France is a country in which several religions are practised, and where a very great number of people reduce religion to a few solemn acts (baptism, first communion, marriage, funeral) and expect in the ordinary course of life to keep their independence of thought with regard to the clergy. The French mind, very rational and not very mystical, tends to make of religion a question purely personal, and will not see it put into the category of social or civic duties. This is French sense of liberty of conscience and creed.

(Reprinted from " The Indian Social Reformer. ")

[It is gratifying to see such a frank testimony of the educational system of the *écoles laïques* of France. As is well known religious education is no longer allowed in France. The present writer has no doubt that in the long run other countries will follow the example of France in banning religious education in schools. This is the only way of preventing immature minds to be polluted by superstitions and to lessen the pernicious influence of priests among the masses. Religious publications, of course, are always trying to show that the French people are longing for the return of the priestly influence and that a decided reaction in favor of religion is visible in that country since the Great War. Nothing of the kind is the case there. The present writer recently met a number of Frenchmen and women who visited India. They assured him that the French people in general were indifferent about religion and among the educated it is hopelessly dead. " C'est idiot de penser que des gens éclairés qui ont abandonné le Christianisme comme une superstition orientale puissent y retourner " they said to the writer. People in rural districts, they say, still want religion, but with the right sort of education it is hoped that before long Christianity in France will be professed mostly by the uneducated and the poorer classes.

Ed. REASON.]

RELIGION AND REASON

What is the cause of the attachment that so many display—in public—to the term “religion?” Why, after having rejected all that really continues religion, and having professed the desire to be to be guided solely by scientific methods and conclusions, do we find the same people either trying to establish a “rational” religion, or claim to have a religion of their own? It would seem that if one is really without religion, and intelligently so, elementary honesty would lead one so to state his position that it would give rise to no misleading conclusions on the part of others.

The answer to this question involves the investigation of a very lengthy chapter in human history. It will be remembered that I defined religion as consisting in the belief in supernatural beings. This is the one thing in which all the religions of the world agree. Religions may differ in a variety of beliefs and customs, but the point of general agreement is reached in the belief in the supernatural. Gods differ in their shape, their power, even in their duration, but in these respects they differ as men differ from each other. Gods are made in the image of men and they have the character of their creators. Gods are the thought-children of the race, and their vitality depends upon the clarity and the strength of the thought-forms that give them birth. And when men cease to believe in the gods, the gods cease to exist.

* * *

Our Heredity

With most “damnable” iteration I have from time to time dwelt upon the fact that all offences against the gods,

offences such as have come down to us in the survival of blasphemy laws, or other laws for the protection of religion, are, primarily, matters of social defence. Where, as in early society, everything is dependent upon gaining the good will of the gods, and where offending them may jeopardise the health of the tribe, or ruin the harvest, or bring about defeat in battle, there is precisely the same justification for punishing the unbeliever as there is for punishing people who so act that they are exposing individuals or communities to disaster. To sap belief in the gods, or to affront them is equal to a man scattering disease germs in Fleet Street. In such circumstances the unbeliever is a social pariah. He is marked as standing apart from his fellows on the most vital of all questions. He is as obnoxious as a pro-German was in 1915, and as unpopular as was a leper in a medieval village. Disbelief in the gods of other peoples may be expressed, doubt as to their greatness is perhaps expected, but to question the gods of your own tribe is something that “simply is not done.”

At a further stage of social development, opposition to one god is made in the name of another, and deposed god may be reduced to the level of an evil spirit, or he may be abolished altogether. And for a very long time the rejection of one god continues to be made in the name of, or in the interests of, another, the Mohammedan god in favour of the Christian one, the Roman Catholic deity in favour of the Protestant God, the Presbyterian deity in favour of the Baptist deity, and so forth. But to be

without a God altogether; that is the terrible thing! To say, "I do not believe in your God," with the implication that one still has some sort of a God for presentation when required are to say, "I do not believe in your religion," again with the implication that, for public purposes at least, one still has a religion, saves one's face. But to say plainly and deliberately, "I do not believe in a God of any kind, I have no religion of any kind" to say this in the simplest possible language, and without the slightest equivocation, implies a degree of mental clarity and moral courage, of which but a minority of people are capable. It is to be able to stand alone; and how many can do that? Where all the foxes have tails, how many can bear to be without some spinal elongation? It singles one out for dishonourable mention, and as the subject of a social boycott that most men and women will risk everything to avert. Genuine independence is still something that one must pay for, and there are not many who care indulge in that extravagance.

So the Chesterfieldian unbeliever who is of the religion of those avowedly "sensible men," who do not say what their religion is, discovers that he is out to reform religion, to purify religion, to rationalize religion, in short, to do anything rather than to make the plain statement that he is without religion himself, and he thinks that the world would be better off if all men were to follow his example.

* * *

Our Rightful Aim

Now I do not believe that it is the rightful work of the disbeliever in religion to purify religion, or to make it rational if that is the proper aim, then

there are scores of churches that one may join, and so help the parson to get on with his job. Besides you cannot make religion commendable to the properly educated reason. You may make religion a little less definite in its form, and for those who admire the clarity of a London fog that is something. You may make religion a little less openly troublesome, but you cannot make it fundamentally useful. You can express religious ideas a little differently, borrowing the language of science and philosophy to do so, but you cannot alter the real character of you cannot alter the real character of religious beliefs. You may even adopt the theory, now advanced by some religious anthropologists, that primitive ideas of God are in fundamental agreement with those of the "advanced" religionist. I can agree with that, only I would read it the other way round, and say that the most advanced ideas of God are in fundamental agreement with those of the savage. And although the two statements *look* identical, the religionist is too artful to have it expressed in that form.

So I say that the work of the true reformer is not to rationalize religion, but to end it. I say that his real task is not even to attempt to prove that he is fundamentally at one with his religious neighbour, but to show that he is in complete and fundamental disagreement with him. I do not think that it is a good policy or a wise policy for the Freethinker to work for a time when Christians and Freethinkers may settle down comfortably together. I believe that his real task should be to work for a time when there are no Christians to settle down with. Our work is not to make religion rational, but to make it impossible.

The best way to do this is for the Freethinker to stand on his own feet. The measure of the real respect that the Freethinker will get from the religious world, will ultimately depend upon the amount of respect he has for himself. If the other foxes *will* wear tails, there is no reason whatever why a man who is born without one, or who has lost the one he had, should acquire and ornament that adds nothing whatever to his dignity. Of course, as I have said, this involves a man's learning to stand alone. At the best it will mean that he must be content with the company of a few; but in this matter one has to decide whether one wishes to be in front or to be with the crowd. The certain thing is that one cannot be in front *with* the crowd. Above all, if we really believe in the value of truth-speaking, and in the importance of marrying language to exact thought we must see that our terminology is as free as possible from misleading connotations. There is plenty of liberal thinking about to-day; our growing need is for exact thinking; and when we have achieved this, the courage to express it without hesitation and without ambiguity.

* * *

Reason or Logic ?

A final word may be said on the use of the words "rational," and "Rationalism" in connexion with belief and disbelief. Differentiation on these lines is quite unwarrantable. The comment that you cannot argue against the use of reason without depending upon reason, and so *destroy your case*, is at least as old as the time of Socrates. It is idle for the "Rationalist" to say that the Roman Catholic does not believe in "Reason," because he starts from a different premiss,

or reaches a different conclusion from himself. He might as legitimately accuse a man of not being subject to physiological laws because he does not believe in their existence, or that he does not exemplify them because he has an impaired constitution. The real complaint against theologians of all kinds is not that they have refused to reason, or that they do not believe in reason, or that they have not tried to create a "rational religion," but that they have played the "merry devil" with reasoning. Even in the case of Mr. Belloc, who says quite plainly that he accept what the Church teaches and trusts her more than he does his own reason, he is not forsaking "reason" and is no less a believer in it than is any Freethinker. He is giving a reason why he accepts the authority of the Church, and although his reason may be an illogical one, it cannot be called non-rational. It is just illogical.

There is, in fact no essential opposition between reason, as such, and religion. The rejection and the acceptance of religion are both based on processes of reasoning. Where disbelief in religion exists the proper term, the only term that indicates intellectual clarity and straightforwardness, is "Freethought," which stands for the rejection of authority in all matters of opinion. The truth is that when we dismiss a statement as "unreasonable," we do not mean that the process by which the alleged unreasonable conclusion is reached is not identical in its nature with a "reasonable" one, but that it is illogical—either that the premiss from which we start is wrong, or that the conclusion does not follow from the premiss.

Reasoning is concerned with judgments and judgments are concerned with infe-

rences from given data. Here is a handful of examples:—

- (a) The barometer is falling and there will be rain.
- (b) Prayers have been offered to God and rain will come.
- (a) Rheumatism may be cured by brine baths and a carefully chosen diet.
- (b) Rheumatism may be cured by prayers offered to St. Gervase.
- (a) The Pope has been given authority in matters of religious beliefs by God Almighty.
- (b) No man is entitled to claim authority where religious belief is concerned.
- (a) In the face of what is known of the nature of procreation a Virgin Birth is impossible.
- (b) God Almighty, with whom all things are possible, may cause a Virgin to give birth to a child.

So one might continue. But will anyone indicate where the one set of propositions dispenses with reason, while the other uses it? Or can anyone show that there is less reason employed, or less dependence placed upon reason in the one case than in the other? In each case we start from a given premiss—*i. e.*, the power of a saint or the virtues of medical treatment—and we proceed to a conclusion and then state a judgment. We may have false premisses, and then our conclusions are bound to be wrong, or we may have sound premisses and proceed illogically to a false conclusion. But to say that A believes in reason, and B does not, on no other ground than that different conclusions are reached, or in the premiss with which each starts, is

absurd. One might well paraphrase a well-known saying, “Oh, reason, what absurdities are committed in thy name!” Reasoning may be good or bad, but its operations cannot be denied in any case where the expression of a judgment is concerned.

So I do not complain of Roman Catholics, or of the followers of Mrs. Eddy, that they refuse to reason, or even that they refuse to trust their reason, because both these statements are fundamentally untrue. My objection to both is that their reasoning is bad, it is illogical, the premiss is not warranted by facts, or the conclusion does not follow from the premiss taken. The circulation of the blood is just as true when the blood flows freely, as it is when it has to force its way through a constricted artery; reason is none the less reason because in the one case it proceeds logically, and in the other case illogically. A man who, as we say, refuses to reason, “is only reasoning that it is unwise or dangerous to follow other courses than that of silence, or verbal accommodation.”

The Freethinker who says to the Roman Catholic, “I believe in the supremacy of reason” is really saying nothing at all, unless he adds, “and my reasoning shows me that your belief is quite false.” But in that case he is avowing himself to be a Freethinker, and is accusing the Roman Catholic of bad reasoning. And, once again, those who properly recognize the nature of intellectual progress will see to it that the terms we use lack as little as possible in the direction of clarity of meaning and definiteness of application.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

From the Freethinker.

BOOK REVIEWS

Modern Knowledge and Old Beliefs, being a sequel to "The Churches and Modern Thought," by Vivian Phelps: 138 pages, Sh.1/-net. Watts & Co. Johnson's Court, Fleet, London, E. C. 4.

The author needs no introduction to those who are acquainted with his old book, which is one of the most effective contributions to rationalistic propaganda. The present volume deals with the latest Christian apologetics. Christianity has long been in conflict with modern scientific knowledge and has been trying its level best to pretend that science and religion are not incompatible. It has often been helped in this pretence by scientists with a mystic turn of mind and Christians never stop to consider the scientific value of their pronouncements. X and Y are scientists, ergo all their utterances must be true, whether they refer to their special subjects or are utterly irrelevant. Because electrons fail to behave as they are expected to, or do not allow us to guess how they will behave, Sir James Jeans pretends that "Science has no longer any unanswerable arguments to bring against our innate conviction of free-will." On the same data, Sir Arthur Eddington would have us believe that "we cannot find a particle of evidence in favour of determinism," and free will being essential to the idea of sin, on which all religions are based, these conclusions are pounced upon as proving the existence of God. The reasoning of these unscientific scientists is at least as bizarre as the behaviour of electrons. Of course these conclusions have shocked all rational thinkers. They have been criticised by Professor Levy

and Bertrand Russell, while Prof. Einstein has declared that "That nonsense is not merely non sense, but objectionable nonsense."

The slightest modification of scientific theories is interpreted by Christian apologists to mean that no scientific theory is worth anything. Newton's laws are supposed to be disproved by Einstein's theory, and Darwin's theory replaced by others. These modifications often only mean, as Bertrand Russell points out, that science is becoming more and more accurate by successive approximations. For all practical purposes, Newton's laws still hold good, and Darwin's theory is still valid in its broad outline.

An important point in modern apologetics is the question of Values, with a capital V: "Intrinsic or absolute values of a different order from sensuous existences, not less real than they, and given to us as facts of knowledge" says Dean Inge. This is somewhat mysterious, but what is religion without mystery? He explains further that these Values are Goodness, Truth and Beauty. In face of the hooliganism often displayed by religious people, the religious massacres and tortures that have blackened the face of History, he has the audacity to pretend that these are the exclusive appanage of religion! This is merely abuse of the opponent to make up for want of logic. What utterly damns Christianity's claim to be a universal religion are the verses 11 and 12, Chapter iv. of Mark, quoted by the author: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That

seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." Can narrowness of mind go any further? Is not the conversion work of missionaries directly opposed to this teaching, or do they expect to do people a good turn on the sly, without letting their Master know?

The author also refers to so-called "religious experience." Bishop Barnes says: "Yet we have seen, felt, known the presence of God." There is no means of distinguishing this 'religious experience' from hallucinations and cannot therefore claim to be evidence of the existence of God. There are people in all religions who claim to have this experience, but their experience always corresponds to their own religious convictions, which is in itself sufficient to nullify their value as evidence. Flammarion, the French astronomer, used to believe in spirits, who used to give him astronomical information which always agreed with what he knew, but when a few more moons were discovered for Saturn, of which the spirits had not told him anything, he saw that the spirits were imaginary.

The evil that we see in the world has always presented a hard problem. Any body who believes in God has to admit that He is a cruel tyrant, able but unwilling to relieve suffering. Bishop Barnes says: "It is an *impasse*, the most impenetrable of all the barriers which man tries to pierce by speculative inquiry." He is unwilling to postulate two Gods or believe that God is morally inert. The older religions got rid of the difficulty by imagining a number of conflicting Gods, but if you insist on having only

one, you have to be mystic enough to say that God is moral, but still permits evil for the "emergence of ethical values," which will do for a Jesuit, but not for rational people.

The last chapter of the book contains an "appeal for candour. The general public has no idea of the real number of unbelievers, because people are not willing to tell the truth even to themselves. They find it more convenient to tell themselves that they believe even when they do not," an act of faith "as they call it. Then again, there are the "silent sceptics" who prefer to keep their rationalistic views to themselves, not realising that thus they help to maintain absurd and sometimes horrible superstitions. Most people hesitate to destroy old beliefs on the ground that they have nothing to put in their place. The author proposes "systematic non-theological moral instruction" to take the place of religious instruction. He mentions the good work done by Mr. F. J. Gould in this direction and also Dr. R. P. Paranjpye's "Crux of the Indian Problem," which speaks of moral instruction. The fact is that most of us are only willing to talk rationalism, but not to do anything practical about it. Dr. Paranjpye, for instance, when he was Minister of Education, did not object to the Government grant to the Wilson College which insists on having a *compulsory Bible Class*. I suppose there were cogent reasons, as there always are for everything. But who is to do these things if a rationalist Minister cannot? So long as Rationalism remains mere talk, progress is bound to be extremely slow.

The author quotes from John Stuart Mill: "The world would be astonished if

it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments, of those most distinguished even in popular estimation for wisdom and virtue, are complete sceptics in religion." For some reason or other, personal interest, fear of giving offence, of unpopularity, they refrain from giving expression to their views and so much is lost to rationalism and gained to religion for religion has an interest in claiming that those who are not against it are for it.

The great strength of Christianity, as the author says, lies in the fact that few believers read the Bible, the absurdities of which as a religious book would be the best propaganda for Rationalism. For

Roman Catholics, especially, religion is personified by the priest. In this country in particular Catholics are punished if they fail to attend Church regularly and the Church is organised to persecute defaulters and few have the courage to break away from their chains. Rationalists are lacking in organisation, even for defensive purposes, much less for offence. Independent thought does not naturally lead to cohesion and religious people have an interest in standing together to defend the remains of their faith. Unless therefore rationalists reason themselves into an aggressive cohesion, they have little chance of making any headway.

R. D. KARVE.

God in his manifold manifestations.

This is an unpretentious little work by Mr. E. A. Sargon, a well known Bombay lawyer. The book is remarkably well written, showing that the author is not only a Hebrew scholar but also a highly cultured man thoroughly conversant with modern Science and modern thought.

Armed with such knowledge, the author attempts to reconcile the Story of Creation as depicted in the Book of Genesis with modern Science. He argues his point remarkably well and almost convinces one that the writer of Genesis wrote nothing that cannot be harmonized with modern knowledge. The discussion on Matter, Life, The Soul, The Cosmos and Evolution is worth

reading. With that of the Soul, especially, we are quite in agreement. The book is written on rationalistic lines and we are sure that many Rationalists will be greatly interested in it. Though many of us may not agree that Mr. Sargon has succeeded in reconciling the two versions of Genesis on Creation—The Elhovistic and the Jehovistic which are themselves not in harmony—with modern Science as there seems to be a confusion in the mind of the author about the Creation of the planet Earth with the rest of the Cosmos, few will disagree that the book is very interesting and is written by a very cultured and intelligent person.

C. L. D.

THE MENTALITY OF MAGISTRATES

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To

The Editor, "Reason"

SIR.

In a recent French novel, "Un Crime d'Amour," by Jean Aubourg, the author emphasizes the fact that in so-called justice, the mental outlook of the judge is much more important than the law or legal machinery. In the story, the real criminal escapes and an innocent man is caught.

In my recent case, the learned magistrate seemed to be rather riled because I mentioned in my statement that the outlook of magistrates is the result of heredity and environment like that of everybody else. Since my proposition applies not only to human beings, but also to animals and even the vegetable world (so far as possible), I do not see how even learned magistrates can be excluded.

The one in question illustrated the illiberality of which magistrates are capable, by refusing to raise my fine by one rupee so as to make the sentence appealable. Comment is hardly necessary.

Of course magistrates have done worse things than that; for instance the Tennessee magistrate who held that the theory of evolution must not be taught because it is contrary to religion. So long as magistrates have the power of gagging not only advanced thought, but even commonly accepted truth, any attempt at educating the general public can be frustrated by magistrates who are so inclined. I think a remedy will be to have at least two magistrates for every case and see that they do not belong to the same community.

Yours etc.

R. D. KARVE.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

Should stray dogs and rats be destroyed? This is a problem which is actually agitating the minds of Orthodox Hindus at Ahmedabad. The consensus of opinion among Hindus there, is that nothing of the kind must be done as it is against their religious susceptibilities that any animal should be destroyed. We read in

the daily papers of a recent date that "The Ahmedabad Municipality, which a few days ago threw out the proposal to remove stray dogs from the city, on grounds of religious sentiments, today passed a proposal for filing the papers about distributing rat-traps.

"D. Ramprasad at first moved that rat-traps be distributed in the city, but the question as to how the rats were to be disposed of after being caught made him withdraw the proposal, as he did not like to take the blame for destroying the rats." Eventually the Corporation decided to also file the papers about the destruction of rats !

This is an illustration how a stupid religious belief can become a dangerous practice likely to endanger the lives of many. It will be recalled that twenty-five years ago the Bombay Municipality met with the same kind of resistance about rat-killing to free the City from plague, and quite recently certain Hindus of Poona strongly objected to any measure to kill rats there, though it is now well known that Plague is spread by rats. Are the Health Authorities in India going to bow down before such crass ignorance and absurd susceptibilities? It is inconceivable that they will, for the sake of the lives of other people who do not share the erroneous beliefs of those City Fathers.

* * *

It was reported in the papers some days ago that Mr. Young, the Chief Justice of Lahore, seriously thinks that Hindus in Law Courts should be made to take oaths on Ganges water and Mahomedans on the Koran. He is reported to have said that in the estimation of prominent Indian lawyers a large proportion of witnesses in courts in this country were prepared to swear falsely. The root of the evil, he pointed out, was the futility of the oath which meant precisely nothing to a vast majority of witnesses and suggested that the substitution of the oath on Ganges water and the Koran would effect a miraculous change.

* * *

We have no doubt that for a vast majority of the people of India, that is to say Hindus and Mahomedans, which means some millions of people, and we may safely say for a vast majority of people all over the world, the oath as administered in the law courts has become a meaningless ceremony. We are, however, sceptical whether the substitution of Ganges water as far as Hindus are concerned, would effect the "miraculous" change Mr. Justice Young expects. The fact is that the administration of the oath is an archaic custom, based on the idea that people are so afraid of the divine wrath that they dare not tell lies after calling the deity as a witness for what they are going to say. We would suggest that swearing on the tail of a living cow may be more impressive to Hindus. Every court should keep a cow for the purpose. Many witnesses may doubt whether the water on which they are asked to swear actually comes from the Ganges, but they cannot doubt the presence of a living cow. The superstition about the sanctity of the water of the Ganges may receive a still greater encouragement if English Officials in India were to support this belief.

* * *

While on the sanctity of the waters of holy rivers in India, it reminds us that a good number of holy men last month lost their lives from Cholera through drinking the highly polluted water of the Godavari river at Nasik. The water of the Godavari, it would appear, does not possess the property of destroying the deadly germs of cholera, typhoid fever, and dysentery as that of Mother Ganges, the holiest of rivers in the world. (They affirm that

there is bacteriological evidence to that effect). Despite the efforts of the Nasik health authorities to dissuade these holy men from using the contaminated water of the Godaverī, they continued to do so with utter contempt for profane advice. The result was that Cholera played havoc with them. It must have been a touching sight, indeed, to see them sacrificing their lives so willingly to Mother Godaverī whom they loved so dearly. A touching example of filial affection!

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A propos of our comment last month on the bleeding and talking crucifix of Asti, in Italy, a correspondent reminds us that some years ago, when the burning question of the unity of Hindus and Muslims was agitating India, and great efforts in that direction were being made, though without success, the idol of the great god Shiva in a temple at Nagpur was one morning seen to be weeping copiously. Unlike the talking crucifix of Asti, the great god did not utter a word, not even to any poor woman who must have been present. The miracle, however, was duly attested by a number of people who went to see it. Among them, we are told, were reliable and respectable people such as doctors, lawyers, B.Sc.'s, Railway officials and others. The matter as we now remember, was reported in most of the papers in India. Needless to say that the incident caused a tremendous sensation. The alleged occurrence caused a good deal of wonder until a learned pandit explained that the cause of Mahadeo's sorrow was the irreconcilable attitude of the Hindus and Muslims over the question of Unity. One is sorry to note that even the grief of India's great God did not affect in the least the population. They are as wide

apart as before. Asti, after all, is not the only place in the world where inanimate objects show miraculous phenomena.

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The question of playing music before mosques has become such a serious one in India, owing to the frequent breaches of peace it causes, that it is time the more enlightened Mahomedans should make a real effort to make the more ignorant of their co-religionists understand the stupidity of it. In their zeal to prevent what they foolishly imagine to be a great insult to their religion, these ignorant fanatics will resort to violence at the slightest provocation. These misguided people do not seem to realize that if Allah objects to music he can very well put a stop to it himself without requiring their stupid help. It does not seem, however, that God has any particular objection to music. The Christians like to serenade him on every occasion, they can and the Hindus would think it a great neglect of duty if they did not make him feel lively with drums and cymbals. Only the Mahomedans imagine that Allah is so stern and serious that the very sound of music enrages him very much. We are sorry to learn that quite recently this erroneous belief led to a serious disturbance at Bandra when some of these zealots strongly objected to some Mahomedan children playing a drum in the compound of a mosque there. In the scuffle that ensued two Mahomedans were mortally wounded and some others seriously injured.

* * *

One is pleased to hear that the Jains are realizing the abuse of priest-craft. At a recent Conference of the community in Bombay it was resolved that Priestcraft having become a great nuisance in

the community and a cause of its backward condition, measures must be taken to lessen the baneful influence of the lazy priest who batten on the ignorance of the people. We doubt whether in its present state of education and culture the Jain community can do much to free itself from the influence of Priestcraft. It is however, a good sign that some of the more enlightened members have sounded the alarm to remind the more credulous ones that Priest craft is an intolerable nuisance and the cause of the demoralization of people.

* * *

The Times of India of May 10th, in announcing that an unique festival is shortly going to take place in a ruined Church at Conditia, a village in Salsette, says: "The image of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, which will be taken in procession to the Church, was taken according to old Portuguese records, from a church which is now submerged in the Vihar lake. It is a very old work, and is the subject of the usual "miracle" legends." Note the word miracle in inverted commas, which probably show, that the writer of that note is well acquainted with the stories of miracles associated with sacred objects in the Churches of Salsette. These poor benighted Salsettians are great believers in miracles, and their great pleasure in life is to hold festivals in expectation of such a happening. Education is very badly needed in Salsette—the paradise of priests and nuns.

* * *

A Sunday paper of the 13th May publishes an interesting picture showing some Hindus keenly watching a burly Hindu gentleman throwing something in the sea. This was H. E. General Bahadur Shamshere Singh Rana, the Nepalese Minister at the Court of St. James, London, who left for England by the mail boat on the 12th of May. It would appear that this being his first voyage, "poojah" (offering) was performed at the Pier when offerings of fruits, coins, cloth, etc. were made to the sea. We do not know who is the sea demon H. E. was anxious to propitiate. Could not have been Neptune, as we do not believe that he cared for fruits, coins, cloth, etc. They say that he was fond of fishes, beer and sea weeds.

* * *

Prof. J. B. Haldane writes in the Daily Express (a Catholic paper): "To judge from their symptoms, many of the supposed victims of the Borgias really died of acute appendicitis, brought on by over eating, rather than from poison" This opinion has greatly delighted the well known Catholic journal "The Universe". It ironically announces that Prof. J. B. Haldane is not a Jesuit in disguise. The next to enthuse over this non-medical opinion will surely be Mr. Hilaire Belloc who believes that only Catholic history is trustworthy and the rest is clearly directed against his Holy Mother the Church. Pope Alexander VI will soon be represented as one of the greatest Catholic saints that ever lived.

THE CENTENARY OF ERNST HAECKEL 1834-1919

The Literary Guide of London reminds us that this year is the centenary of the birth of Ernst Haeckel, the great German biologist who died in 1919. Ernst Haeckel, who Sir Arthur Keith, the great English authority on the *Descent of Man*, in a recent publication, describes as a Colossus among zoologists, was born at Potsdam, Germany, on February 16, 1834.

He embraced the medical career and studied at the University of Wursburg under Kolliker and Virchow, and completed his studies at the University of Berlin where he took his degree of Doctor of Medicine. In the latter University, he studied under the famous Johannes Muller, a great scientist of the time. That man was destined to play a great part in the future career of Haeckel, as very early he impressed upon him the necessity of careful studies and researches to solve some problems in the field of biology which at that time were pressing on the minds of some thoughtful scientists. It was this circumstance that changed the course of Haeckel's professional activities, and made him become one of the greatest biologists the world has ever seen. Sir Arthur Keith quite rightly says, "There was no one in his time (nor has any one appeared since) who possessed his mastery of the kingdom of living things." Only those who have studied Haeckel's numerous works and are capable of appreciating the vast amount of research he did in biology are in a position to endorse Sir Arthur Keith's opinion of him. The vast knowledge of Haeckel, his penetrating insight into the science of living things,

his thorough grasp of the difficult study of the evolution of living organisms, make one marvel that any man could master so much knowledge especially at a time when the data for such work were scanty. It was only a genius who could achieve what he did, create the modern science of biology in the light of the theory of Evolution. Ernst Nordenkiöld in his "History of Biology" generously acknowledges that Haeckel, along with Darwin, is among the great names who created the modern science of biology—a view that many other scientists admit.

At the time of his graduation about the year 1857, the science of biology was still in infancy. Thanks to works of Wolfe and Von Baer a little was known of embryology. Schleiden and Schwann had discovered the cell, and Virchow was applying the cell theory to the science of medicine. Kolliker was then unravelling with the microscope the marvels of tissue building, thus creating one of the branches of biology, namely, histology. Men like Ehrenberg, Bronn, Ecker, His, and a few others were then considered great authorities in the nascent science of biology. The great authority of Cuvier in zoology was dominating, and the rigid classification of Linnaeus in botany was dogmatic. Most biological problems were unsolved, and thoughtful minds like Johannes Muller and some others felt the unsatisfactory state of knowledge in that science. Haeckel, himself, who at that time was studying low marine creatures, felt as regards the Medusa that species were in a state of flux just as they were in

botany. His studies of the Radiolaria, greatly encouraged by Johannes Muller, further confirmed this in his mind and set him to think seriously. It was about that time that Darwin's epoch-making book, "the Origin of Species" (1860) became known in Germany. Haeckel read that book, and, by one of those rare insights, familiar only to special intellects, at once became convinced that Darwin had unlocked the secret that would solve the biological problems that puzzled so many. His contemporaries, on the other hand, found nothing remarkable in that book and thought it to be the wild speculations of a mad English man! At that time, the belief in the immutability of species and that all creatures were specially created held the field with the majority—laymen as well as scientists. It is true that Jean Lamarck, the famous French scientist, had already written on the transformation of species by natural laws, but his theory found little favour with the leading scientists of the time, though some were greatly impressed by it. As a matter of fact, certain thoughtful minds were puzzled by certain biological phenomena which they thought could not be reconciled with the belief of special creation and fixed species. The existence of extinct species, whose fossils are embedded in rocks, was one of those puzzles. The great Cuvier tried to solve the difficulty by explaining that catastrophic occurrences periodically annihilated them and their replacement by new ones was but natural. This theory, though accepted by many, could not convince the more thoughtful who considered it a fantastic one.

The appearance of Darwin's book caused a tremendous sensation in the scientific world of that time. In England,

the home of its birth, it was received with considerable hostility, and in Germany its reception was not more friendly. In that country, men like Keferstein, Otto Volgar, Semper, Kiebel, William His, Eeker, Ehrenberg, Agassiz, Rutenmeyer, Giebel and many other leading scientists of that time unreservedly rejected the theory of Darwin. This accounts why at the Scientific Congress of Stettin (1863), where the theory was for the first time discussed before a large body of eminent German scientists, it was received with derision. Haeckel tells us that most of the assembled scientists were red in the face with laughter when he opened the discussion on the subject. Haeckel was a very young man then and he was the only one present who took that theory seriously. He protested against the unscientific attitude of the assembled scientists in not considering the theory on its merit in a scientific spirit. On that occasion he not only defended the theory in the teeth of violent opposition, but he developed the programme which he, himself, was going to unfold for decades. After reviewing the subjects that Darwin's theory embraces, he discussed Man's place in Nature of the strength of that theory, a feat which Darwin, himself, had no courage to do then, though he was certainly convinced that man could not escape the general laws of Evolution. It is fortunate that Haeckel, at that time, had just completed his researches on the Radiolaria and Medusa. This work, which in itself is considered to be a great achievement, had prepared his mind for the reception of Darwin's illuminating theory. Had it not been so, it is possible that like most of his contemporaries he might have found nothing remarkable in it. Haeckel however, was an intellectual

giant; like a flash Darwin's theory illuminated his mind and enabled him to understand many problems that had hitherto remained obscure. It is to his eternal glory and merit that his genius enabled him, not only to grasp all the facts that the theory of evolution reveals and to construct a biogenetic law which served him as a working hypothesis (Sir Arthur Keith says that it is simply marvellous how he could do so with the scanty data at his disposal at that time), but to comprehend the far reaching influence of Darwin's theory in the study of living organisms and their origin. From the time of the Congress of Stettin, Haeckel became the most powerful exponent of Darwinism in Germany. This fact and his combative nature which made him attack vigorously the superstitions of his time, explain why he had so many enemies; but he ignored them all. For more than four decades after the Congress of Stettin, oblivious of the obloquy and outcry against him, Haeckel set himself to attain the ideal he had sketched, namely to construct a system of biology on evolutionary principles that would embrace all lives from the Monera below to Man above. To do these, to collate, arrange and systematize all facts that this system required, to build a genealogical tree that would link all creatures living and extinct that would illustrate this tree, required the most profound knowledge of botany, zoology, and geology, not to mention other allied sciences. As Professor Bolsche says:— "Only one who had done gigantic work could accomplish such a marvellous task." Five years after the Congress of Stettin he published his "General Morphology" which Professor Huxley called "One of the greatest scientific

works ever published" and of which Professor R. Hertwig said "Few works have done as much towards raising the intellectual level of Zoology." His "Natural History of Creation," which became very popular, was an easier version of the above. Among the numerous works he published mention must be made of the "Systematic Phylogeny" for which the Royal Academy of Science of Turin awarded him the Bressa Prize. His "Anthropogeny" or "Evolution of Man" is now universally regarded as one of the greatest and authoritative works on man. His "Riddle of the Universe," which caused a tremendous sensation when it appeared, is a condensation of his scientific and philosophical views. This book has been translated in thirteen languages and sold by hundreds of thousands. It is no exaggeration to say that it has enlightened hundreds of thousands and shaken their beliefs in superstitions. His "Wonders of Life" is, itself, considered to be a wonder of industry and erudition.

It was Haeckel who demonstrated the existence of microcellular organisms to which he gave the name of Protists or Monera. He combatted the cell dogma which would have impeded instead of advancing the theory of evolution. To day, the science of protistology has been added to that of biology. In Embryology he not only described in a masterly and authoritative manner all the phases of development, but he established the fact that the embryo passes through all the forms of its ancestral origin. He formulated the theory known as phylogeny (the stem) and ontogeny (the individual) to interpret these phases; and in order to explain the modifications that the embryo undergoes he showed the influence of heredity on the one hand

and adaption on the other on its development. He gave the name of palingenesis and cenogenesis to these phenomena. He described the gastræ and coelum stages in embryological development and predicted that living organisms corresponding to these stages will be found one day. Thirty years after, Monticelli discovered such creatures in the Red Sea. He successfully combated August Weismann on the question of acquired characters and in many other respects combatted erroneous views on biology.

Haeckel found many opponents to his revolutionary views among the other scientists who were generally hostile to the theory of evolution. This was only natural. As he was also an uncompromising foe of false religious teachings, he made many enemies in the religious world. They attacked him severely and in a most undignified and unscrupulous manner. For instance, they took advantage of the absurd objections of some of the older scientists to the manner he schematized his pictures to make believe that these scientists have accused him of "frauds and forgeries." In this manner they spared no effort to belittle him and to represent him as a discredited scientist and so forth. Things went so far that thirty six of the leading biologists of Germany and Austria were obliged to issue a manifesto in which they condemned in the sharpest manner the methods

of his religious enemies. They also exonerated Haeckel and declared that what he did with his pictures was perfectly legitimate and in the interest of science.

If unscrupulous religion-ridden men tried to belittle and injure the reputation of Haeckel—a perfect waste of time on their part—the scientific world handsomely recognized the immense services be rendered to science. He held four gold medals for scientific researches, and four doctorates (Iena, Berlin, Edinburgh, and Cambridge), eighty diplomas from so many Universities and academical-bodies. He was honoured in his country and on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, the Universities of Italy, through the Prime Minister, greeted him on the occasion as one of the greatest scientists in the world, added that they admired his undying work. Professor Bolsche said many years ago that posterity will appreciate more the genius of Haeckel than his own contemporaries. Already this prediction is being realized. It was not long ago that Professor MacBride expressed the opinion that as we learn more and more of the science of biology, we recognize that Haeckel has illuminated the theory of Evolution in a manner that has not been surpassed by any scientist. Haeckel died peacefully in 1919 at the ripe age of eighty five.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

INDIAN RATIONALISTS ON DUTY

A south-Indian State issues an order prohibiting a meeting of atheists as it is likely to wound the religious feelings of the subjects of the Durbar. Elsewhere, in British India, a rationalist meeting had to be dispersed owing to the insistence on the use of the word *Mahatma*. At another place Mr. Gandhi's car was treated to physical violence at the hands of alleged Sanatanists. This land of far stretching extremes has yet to be brought under rationalist cultivation. "It seems not unlikely that we have again entered upon a period of creed-wars" wrote Prof. Harold J. Laski, in the current Rationalist Annual in the article 'On the Social Obligation of Rationalists.' But conditions here are more imminently fraught with danger to the freedom of opinion than in the West where ignorant superstition is not as much responsible as political fanaticism for cleavages in the human family. "What is the duty of a Rationalist in an atmosphere of this kind?" he asks. And in the next breath he wards off the suggestion that Rationalism has an obligation to serve any special creed. The Rationalist 'may be Conservative or Radical, Individualist or Collectivist, Deist or Atheist. So long as his view is built upon an admission that the claims of reason are paramount; so long further, as he is prepared to submit his will and interest to the scrutiny of scientific examination, Rationalism does not demand from him any particular outlook. 'He stresses the need for eternal vigilance which is the inescapable price of freedom. "We have entered upon a time when it is urgent for all who are concerned for civilised standards of life to proclaim the faith that is in

them. They cannot dare with self-respect, to remain enfolded in their private lives..... The world hugs its chains only when the defenders of freedom are silent." To religiously-minded States and to Sanatanists, to those that lift up black flags, as to those that would insist that Mr. Gandhi should always be styled Mahatma, Rationalism commends the civilised standards of life, where freedom of thought, belief and expression obtains, where reason dictates toleration to all views and discriminate choice through wise judgement.

Indian Rationalists will be missing the real spirit of Indian life were they to neglect the fact that this is the land of the idolator. Discarded idols need something to replace with. Man nowhere ceases to worship ideas. What we should guard against is the tendency to transfer such worship to the men that are responsible for them. When we begin to deify men we lose sight of the natural. Hero-worship as a subtle insidious process of supernaturalism is the worst enemy that reason has to contend against. I have worked into this idea in my recent article 'Rationalism and Indian Reconstruction' (Bharat Dharma, March, 1934, and REASON, Bombay, April, 1934.) The real evil attending on the deification of our best men lies in the fact that people lose the sense of kinship with the leaders. If great names (historicity apart) of the Buddha, Krishna and Jesus are lifted up to divine incarnation, the common mind begins to make all allowance for their reformative achievements but sinks into helpless inaction on their lines, because, it is not given to mortals to follow their track.

When we begin to garland the pictures of Ram Mohun Roy, and Gandhi, we are unconsciously helping the same process of removing these prime movers from the ranks of humanity. None feels the evil consequences of such a course as the Mahatma. He protests against all insinuations of the Avatar. He is grieved over the feet-touching-phobia, not merely on account of the scratching, but on the sound principle of the respect for the commonness of human life. While Mr. Gandhi feels the community of genius with his fellow-beings, they in all ignorance and superstition would drive him away from the rank and file amidst which it is his highest pleasure to move. We are so thoroughly steeped in superstition that not all the wisdom of the Mahatma is kindling us into the path of Buddhi.

The highest flight of genius is yet a stroke of humanity. Rationalism comprehends the supernormal personality no less than the common run of the mass level. Mystic theorising apart, the view held by psychologists like F. W. H. Myers, that spontaneous genius stands for the fuller expression of the human faculties rather than an abnormality, that in the average run of the species the varied complex possibilities remain at the lower stage of unfoldment, has much to commend itself to Rationalists, in that such a view strengthens the bend between the prophet and his following. (Cf. *Human Personality* by Myers, Vol. i. p. 71.) But the prophet and the seer are men of genius for their age, and not for all time, absolutely. "Life is change. Each living organism changes. Each generation differs from its predecessor. To assign a fixed norm to a changing species is to shoot point-blank at a flying bird. The actual average at any

given moment is no ideal standard. Rather the furthest evolutionary stage now reached is tending, given stability in the environment, to become the average of the future." (ibid. p. 76). And when that future is reached, what had been the radiant discovery of the hour shall pass into the record of history to stand comparison with like achievements of man. It is our highest consolation that Sriram and Prophet Mahomed once shared our sorrows and pains and yet wrung out the best from the human body, not that they emanated from on high detached from earthly mould. •

What separates the great mind from the smaller ones is thus really the difference in degree of the intensity of life, rather than any diversity of its quality. As Myers put it 'the differential of genius lies in an increased control over subliminal mentation,' and 'the man of genius is for us the best type of the normal man, in so far as he effects a successful co-operation of an unusually large number of elements of his personality-reaching a stage of integration slightly in advance of our own.' *An increased control over subliminal mentation* verges on the faculty of intuition, the *inner sense* of the Mahatma. We meet with arithmetical prodigies, calculating boys who give out the solution of the biggest problems in Mathematics without the aid of pen and paper, and in much shorter time than may be required for working them out in the usual way. That is a spontaneous unexplained gift of nature. While an increased control over subliminal mentation may either be spontaneous or may perhaps be acquired. Perhaps, the Buddhi Yoga of the Hindu texts eminently corresponds to Myers' psychological study. Rationalists may

be permitted to suspend judgment until 'Atman' places before them more tangible evidence than has so far been accorded. Until such time, soul, spirit, and Atman are bound to receive a merely verbal significance that they originated in the language, of a people whose experience it is given to few of us to share. Mahatma is another such word of mystic significance. As dedicated to plain-thinking, Rationalist life quails before such language.

But that is not to say that Rationalists are forbidden the use of these words. Such words as God, Soul, Spirit, and the holy one are there. They are the facts of life, of human life, and of constant psychological significance. We shall be missing the essence of Indian life, should we have the least doubt on their existence, and the likelihood of their continuance for some considerable time. It would be achieving much, should Rationalism confine them to the field of psychology, poetry and religious ecstasy. In its endeavour to so confine them there is the other danger of Rationalists itself becoming highly religious, emotional fanatic, and worse intolerant. That is a danger which every Rationalist on duty cannot guard oneself against too strongly. It is a warning to ourselves that we cannot afford to us the aesthetic latitude that is permissible to the Sanatanists, for example. We should never swing in our balanced judgment, the equipoise of intellect that ought to remain our peculiar property, the pose of Buddhi-Yoga that pertains to true Rationalism. Our character does not extend to the emotional side of experience, as much as it is given to the Religious sensitive to traverse. He may throw brick-bats at men in the name of God whose command he believes to

follow in the act. On the otherhand, as the Rationalist (Madras, d. 8-12-1933) points out, 'the Mahatma is essentially religious, and hence is our inveterate opponent, but he struggles to abolish untouchability and hence is an ally. To be opposed to him will "land us in queer company-that of the Sanatanists." Even Rationalism we should begin to realise is matter for relative inculcation, and we should be poor realists if for the sake of nominal verbal or terminological objections we were obliged to let go the opportunities of greater service.

In the Thinkers' Library Series is included Morley's book "On Compromise," which answers our difficulty. Having a clear grasp of the nature and strength of the opposing forces, it is permissible to yield on points of minor significance, gripping fast the main substance of our principle. We should be prepared to go the whole way in the service of the Rationalist cause, and in time we hope to convince our inveterate opponents. But until such time, which may not reach in the life of any single individual, it does not mean that we stop all propaganda. The folly of refusing to act until the whole country gives up what we consider is an irrational outrage to commonsense, is quite obvious. Except in India, possibly, in no other country will such issues be made to depend on the use or otherwise of particular words. That is probably the case here perhaps because we are less businesslike or more given to idealism, if that is greater merit. But Rationalism has every right to assume that the highest evidences of supernormality are yet within the human level. The existence of the soul may ever remain in scientific doubt. The Rationalist has no faith in anything which is not warranted by

experience, rooted in reason. Yet, Rationalism stands to lose nothing by accepting the popular nomenclature of Atman, and the Mahatman. Only, the priggishness that would prevent the

Rationalist meeting in the Country on ground of terminological persistence is beyond the range of normal human rationality.

M. V. V. R. RANGACHARI.

AGNOSTICISM

Agnosticism means the state of *not knowing*. You might as well ask me why I don't *know* about life on Mars, as to ask why I'm agnostic about life in heaven. Of the two, I'd bet on Mars. It can be seen with the naked eye.

I'm an agnostic because I don't believe everything I hear. Do you know anybody who *does* believe everything he hears? We're all agnostic about some things. What are you agnostic about? How do you draw the line between what you don't believe?

When a man wants me to believe in his religion, I don't demand much of him. I only expect him to prove what he says about his heaven and hell. That is n't much to ask. Why, if I didn't ask that I might get converted to Christianity one day, Buddhism the next, Taoism the next, Islamism the next, Judaism the next, and so on.

If the Jew, the Christian, the Moham-medan, the Taoist, the Buddhist each chooses to believe things he can't prove he shouldn't try to make me justify myself for not believing them. Always remember, when the other fellow wants to make you believe something, the onus is on him to show *why* you should.

Revealed Religion is interested in two propositions: belief in a god and belief in immortality. A belief in a god

is important to them, for, without a god they could see no way to believe in immortality. My days are drawing to a close, and not once have I found anyone who can prove either one—or give any proof of either one.

It is precisely because they haven't enough proof to pile up a molehill that religionists idealize the faith that "moves mountains." If you want to believe something you can't prove, you've got to have faith. That's why they've made blind belief their cardinal virtue. I think it's one of the greatest of sins—if there are any sins.

To make people believe blindly, they've scared them with hell-fire. Then somebody got the idea of a god of love, and that proved a very appealing idea. So they've been trying ever since to reconcile their god's love with his hell-fire. I can't do it.

Euclid never threatened anybody with hell-fire for not believing that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. He did n't have to threaten. He *proved* it

When science began to show up religion's claim to all knowledge and wisdom and power, people became harder to scare. So the religionists, like good merchandisers, changed their selling tactics. They've sort of given over talking about

hell-fire. It's becoming bad pulpit-manners for a clergyman to roast his congregation before dinner. He finds it hard to keep a congregation in the city if he does. So nowadays they try to seduce you into believing, instead of scaring you into the fold. Sunday schools give movies and picnics, and the clergy try to play upon your desire to live forever in a kind of eternal picnic. Though why anybody should want that, is beyond me.

The gentle clergy! Where once they'd throw you to the flames for a single honest doubt, today they act not as executioner, but as midwife to assist you through the pains of difficult belief.

They say: "Something within you *wants* to believe in eternal life. Therefore there *must be* eternal life!"

Now what kind of nonsense is that? Do you get everything you want? Do you even get a fair share of what you want in this life? I never have, and I have never known anybody who did. So why expect pie in the sky by-and-by just because you may want it? The truth is, people find it pathetically easy to believe what they want to believe. That's why every insane asylum has four or five Napoleons.

Another religious trick to make you believe what can't be proved, is to befuddle you by pushing your mind out to the limits of human intelligence. At that point, your tormenter pretends that he knows more than you do. He's either deceiving you, or himself.

He says: "Everything must have a cause." (I guess he forgets about miracles for a moment.) "Therefore," your religionist goes on, "the very universe itself must have been started by some Great Cause, and that Great Cause is God."

That's fine. But if everything must have a cause, what caused the Great Cause? You're up against a stone wall.

It's precisely the same as the old riddle about space. What's beyond the farthest star? Space. No human being can imagine space without end, yet no human being can imagine an end to space. The question "what's beyond that—and beyond that—and that?" just keeps recurring till your brain reels.

So there you are—at the very limit of human intelligence, with two opposite things seeming to be true at the same time. And in just the same way, you can't imagine a universe that started without a cause, and you can't imagine a cause that started by itself. So you don't know where you're at, and that's exactly the position the agnostic takes.

But the other fellow builds gods and heavens and hells, theologies, laws, inquisitions, devils, dogma, and personal immortality all upon what he *doesn't know*!

And what a fine time he has, making his gods! Do gods make men, or do men make gods? Ask any religionist that, and he'll say: "Men made every god but my God, and my God made men."

Every god is accused of being man-made by everybody but his own followers—and his own followers say that every *other* god is man-made. It's like two politicians each calling the other a scoundrel, and both being right!

So far as most of the claims of revealed religion are concerned, I'm not only an agnostic; I'm an out-and-out disbeliever. I don't believe that Adam gave birth to Eve by shedding a rib. Washington may have been the Father

of his Country, but I don't think Adam was the Mother of Humanity!

Neither do I believe that little babies go to hell or to "limbo" if they die without having water sprinkled on their heads. I think the doctrine of original sin is one of the most damnable ideas ever foisted on humanity. I despise the indignity offered to women in the doctrine of the immaculate conception. I don't think it's a sin for a woman to have a baby. A little inconvenient at times, perhaps, but scarcely a sin. I've never listened to a word-picture of heaven that didn't respect the figure of Lucifer in that old myth which tell how he was kicked out of that dull, smug place. And as to hell, even the man who invented the idea wouldn't deserve to be sent there, if it existed.

I don't believe the sun ever stood still in the heavens to give the Israelites light to kill more of their enemies. And even if it did stand still, it wouldn't have lengthened the day! I can't swallow the whale that swallowed Jonah.

But, they will tell you, lots of religious people don't believe things like that today.

Well, that's a very good thing, I'm glad they don't, because it's only a few generations ago that they were burning people to death for not believing those very things, and a whole dogmatic fabric of other things equally ridiculous. I'm always glad to see improvement, even in religion.

Lots of people don't believe today that Jesus was born without a father. They say you can believe that Jesus was the Son of God and still believe that He had a human father, and without believing in the miracles, without believing that the

human race got itself condemned to hell because Adam ate an apple.

I say that's unreasonable. I agree with the Fundamentalists, for once in my life. When you give up one little piece of your Bible you give it all up. So say the swallows of Jonah, and so say I. When you stop believing in the fall of Adam, you ought to stop believing in the sacrifice of Jesus, because, according to the Christians, it was the fall of Adam that made the sacrifice of Jesus necessary. As Watts, the hymn-writer said: "In Adam's fall we sinn-ed all." Josh Billings put a lot more life into it by saying: "In Adam's sin we all j'ined in."

Trying to pick the flaws out of revealed religion is like bulling at a loose end in a woolen sweater. Before you know where you're at, you've got it all unraveled.

Yes, the Fundamentalists are right. Those liberal Christians who treat Jonah's whale like a poor relation are destroying their own religion. And that's a very good thing!

Many parts of the Christian church are trying to become intellectually respectable. They're trying to hide a lot of those old supernatural sores—the very sores they flaunted so proudly when they were begging for souls in years gone by. When I was a boy, if you believed the Bible at all you believed it through from cover to cover. Today, Christians have "reservations."

This means they're becoming agnostic about the trimmings of their religion, at least. And why shouldn't they? Think of the incredible things men have done and believed in the name of religion! That story about the Judgment Day for instance. We're all supposed to stand

here on earth to be judged, in our own original flesh, everybody who has ever lived or ever will live.

Now, in the first place the earth probably wouldn't hold us all at one time, but, even supposing it would, how about the cannibal that ate the missionary, taking into his body a lot of the cells that had made up the missionary's. Kind of an awful mess, being resurrected half missionary and half cannibal!

Not to take such an unusual example, just remember how the bodies of millions of soldiers have decomposed on thousands of battlefields, become fertilizer for the crops of hundreds of thousands of farmers, and thus passed into the food and thence into the bodies of millions of other people!

Yes, sir; Judgment Day would present quite a spectacle!

So, if men are becoming agnostic or unbelieving about things like that, I think it's a very encouraging sign. Perhaps they'll prune their tree till it dies. Voltaire and Payne and hundreds of nameless, half-despised, half-feared village atheists have done their work toward making men just a little more free.

What a fight it has been! They have battled against incredible odds—against

seemingly irresistible power, staggering antiquity standing antagonistically against all freedom and especially against change. The church has tried to block every step science has ever taken. When Galileo proved that the earth, far from being the centre of the universe, was just a speck of dust dancing around a flame, Christendom was scandalized. Right then they experienced that vertigo which has grown steadily worse, generation after generation, until today revealed religion is staggering dizzily in ever-widening circles. They grabbed Galileo and made him put their earth right back where he got it. But the damage had been done. Galileo recanted, but the earth kept right on swinging.

Today many "liberal" churchmen say that there is no conflict between science and religion. Theirs is the cry of a tiring warrior who says to his young, fresh adversary: "Now, really, you and I have no quarrel."

It may be that the end of the long struggle is in sight. I don't know. But I regret not one of the blows I have struck, or taken.

CLARENCE DARROW
IN "REAL AMERICA."

MAN 500,000 YEARS FROM NOW

H. L. Shapiro, writing in *Natural History*, says it sometimes occurs to the anthropologists, perhaps more often than to others, to wonder what manner of men will replace the mankind he so assiduously studies. His contemplation of the evolutionary series terminating with man naturally suggests the probability of its continuation into the future when the contemporary human type will have receded to the position of an ancestor to a still more advanced variety of man.

It is rather difficult to determine whether the rate of man's evolution has been slower or faster than that of other creatures. Certainly, in contrast with some of the lowly molluscs, such as the brachiopods for example, man has been a veritable greyhound, nor has he, compared to the horse, shown any tendency to lag. We must conclude that man's capabilities for advancement are excellent, but that evolution is a slow process requiring great stretches of time to manifest itself. If therefore my picture of the average man of 501,983 A.D. does not conform to your aesthetics, you can at least take comfort in the thought that the man of 6993 A.D. will be but little different from what he is today, and for most of us that is far ahead to worry about.

The Distinctive Traits of Man.

The most striking changes that have occurred in the evolution of man from a fourfooted (or four-handed, if you prefer) primate to his proud state are the marked increase of the brain and the assumption of the upright posture. Upon these developments a numerous series of subsidiary changes are dependent. But these two, upright posture and highly

evolved brain, more than anything else, distinguish man anatomically from his anthropoid predecessors. And of the two, I am inclined, perhaps cynically, to hold that the upright posture is the more distinctive. From that remote day in the past when our ancestral anthropoid stock left off using its forelimbs in locomotion and stood up on its own hind legs the upright posture has remained essentially the same. Although the structure of those enterprising primates had been, to some degree, prepared for such an upward step by a long arboreal tutelage, nevertheless one can readily apprehend the repercussions which that event would have on numerous skeletal traits and internal organs, and one can appreciate the pains of adjustment which would follow, for this new mode of progression made it necessary, among other rearrangements, for the foot to develop into a more firmly knit and resistant mechanism, for the pelvis to take on an increasing weight-bearing function, for the thorax to become flattened and for the internal organs to be suspended in the longitudinal axis of the body. The point is that although all sorts of accommodations, some of which are still imperfect, were slowly being made in the structure of these early bipeds, the very stimulus to these gradual alterations remained unchanged. In other words, man having achieved this step did not proceed further along that road for the simple reason that he couldn't. Once the upright posture is attained one can't go on becoming more and more upright.

The brain however underwent no such circumscribed development. It merely expanded slowly. And while the upright posture has remained fixed, the brain, on

the contrary, has continued to increase in size and complexity. For this reason the brain and its enclosing skull are areas where the most significant changes have taken place during the most strictly human history of man.

I can venture therefore, with some confidence to predict that man in 500,000 years will continue to be an upright creature, and with some hesitation that his brain will be larger. The reason for my slight hesitancy with regard to the expansion of the brain in the near future (for 500,000 years is but a few days in man's phylogenetic existence) is that there are some indications that the quality of the brain may improve without a concomitant increase in size. Moreover, Keith has shown that among the Bushmen, for example, the cranial capacity of their ancestors was much greater than is their own. Furthermore, Rhodesian man and some of Neanderthal burials of 50,000 years ago had skulls the size of which was equal to if not greater than our own. But, in general, the tendency from *Sinanthropus* and *Pithecanthropus* to modern man has been for the brain to expand. Actually the cranial capacity of the *Pithecanthropus* was about 900 cubic centimetres (roughly 1,000cc., in *Inanthropus*), appreciably larger than the average for gorillas, 500cc., and than that for chimpanzees, 400cc., but much smaller than we find commonly among the Europeans, 1450 c.c. If we accept the recent estimates that *Pithecanthropus* lived at the end of the Pliocene or the beginning of the Pleistocene, a matter of 1,000,000 years ago, we might, by the assumption of a constant rate of increase and with the aid of simple arithmetical processes arrive at a capacity of 1725 c.c. for our future man 500,000 years hence.

But this need not call up a picture of a balloon headed individual. There are men to be met with without special comment on the streets today, whose skull capacity reaches and even exceeds this figure.

Changes in skull shape.

Professor Arthur Thompson investigated some years ago the effect on the skull of an increased capacity. He found by a simple experiment that if the base of the cranium was kept constant, the cranial vault tended to become rounder as its capacity expanded. The mechanics of his experiment have been amply supported by a number of statistical studies yielding high correlation between head form and cranial capacity. The corollary of these investigations is clear. If the capacity remains constant and the skull base decreases in length we have in effect the same result as increasing skull capacity on a fixed skull base. Actually the modern European skull base reveals a marked shortening. In the Neanderthaloid skull, known as La Chapelle aux Saints, the skull base is 123.4mm long; in the adolescent Le Monstier specimen of the same stock it is 124.0mm; whereas in the succeeding Upper Paleolithic males it averages 104.8mm and in modern Europeans from 94 to 102mm. This reduction is convincingly paralleled by a rise in the cranial index. Moreover, there are other signs indicating the way the evolutionary wind is blowing. Recently, attention has been focused on the increasing brachycephaly or roundheadedness in various parts of Europe. Parsons has noted this phenomenon in modern England where there can be no question of a recent brachycephaly introduced by an invading population. Fischer has similarly reported for

Southern Germany. We can therefore assume that our hypothetical 'homo futurus' will have not only a larger head or brain case but a rounder one as well.

Other changes in the skull.

Pari passu, with the expansion of the skull, which I anticipate will continue into the future, there has been a refinement of the modelling of the skull. The angular and crude primitive cranium has gradually been converted into a smoother and more gracile one. I shall not go into all the ways in which this has taken place. That would require a volume. But an important change readily noticeable to the average observer has been the reduction of the prominent bony ridges over the eyes which in anthropoids and fossil men resembles a heavy bar. At present the female of the human species tends to have a brow that is more or less vertical or smooth above the eyes, whereas in the male there is a moderate swelling above the root of the nose in the region called glabella. To either side of this glabellar area vestigial ridges of bone still persist in the modern male. It is a well marked sex difference and is clearly apparent. With the aid of our evolutionary series we notice that there has been consistent expansion of the frontal regions and a smoothing of the brow as we advance from the primates to modern man. In this respect the female has always been in advance of the male and has pointed the direction in which he has travelled. The ladies may take pleasure in contemplating that it will have taken the males 500,000 years to attain the smoothness of brow which they now possess. As for the females themselves, if a sex difference in the frontal region of the skull is to persist, they will develop infantile brows slightly bulbous.

It was the renowned Metchnikoff, I believe, who considered the digestive organs a grossly overdeveloped system in the human economy. Certainly, many of his less accomplished successors predict the future man with a very reduced digestive apparatus, sufficient only to absorb highly concentrated food-pills with which they fancy man will content himself. Perhaps even such a vestigial digestive tract may be dispensed with altogether if man ever becomes indifferent to food. In that sad day the essential nutriment of life might then be injected directly into the blood stream. But I cannot accept this dismal future. The delights of the table are too pleasant to be lightly eliminated in favour of the joyless and sterile consumption of food pills. I can perceive no diminution in man's appetite-if anything he eats more than primitive man and certainly I have yet to know a healthy man who shows even the faintest inclination to relinquish the sensuous and delicate enjoyment of solid foods. Therefore, I leave you your stomach and its appurtenances.

But even though our digestive system remains intact, one adjunct to it is undergoing modifications and will continue to do so. This is the dentition. No vertebrate is afflicted with such dental decay as is man. Hardly a child among us reaches puberty without some decay developing, few adolescents attain maturity without loss of teeth from caries, and a large number of adults only have teeth at all by the constant vigilance of the dentists.

Unfortunately decay or caries, is not the only evidence of the serious readjustment going on in our dentition. This is also seen in the frequency with which our teeth are mal-erupted. Twisted teeth,

impacted molars, faulty alignments and mal-occlusions are too common to be lightly dismissed. They indicate a deep seated force at work which is generally affecting the population. Indeed so numerous are the children suffering from these mal-eruptions that there has grown into being a branch of dentistry, orthodontia, devoted expressly to the correction of these dental faults.

Dental Modifications.

But this is not the whole story of the degeneration of the human dentition. In still other ways it manifests itself. I shall mention only two more. One is the increasing suppression of the third molars or wisdom teeth. Not only is the age at which it erupts, 18 to 20, being pushed later and later in life, but in many people they are absent in whole or in part. The second is the construction of the jaw. It is obvious that the crowding of the teeth and the construction of the jaws may be associated, but not always is this the case.

Weakening Teeth

One cannot help being convinced that all this evidence is symptomatic of a fundamental process which may in time be responsible for considerable alterations to our dental equipment. I do not propose to enunciate a dogmatic generalization to account for this situation. Controversies on the nature and cure of dental decay have flourished for generations among those interested in teeth. Decay has been attributed to hyperacidity, to endocrine dysfunction and to diet, among other factors. No doubt, the situation is a complex one and the superficial causes may be as varied as the manifestations they produce. But one cannot but be impressed by the fact that the dentition

is an area of weakness. My guess is that the teeth are, to a large extent, losing their function and consequently becoming less vigorous resistant. In other words, they are readjusting themselves to the changed demands upon them. This in itself reduced them to a state of relative non-resistance which makes them especially prone to secondary attacks—endocrine dysfunction, faulty diet and hyperacidity. In their weakened state they are unable to withstand attacks that in lower forms are easily resisted. Perhaps I can make my idea clearer by comparing them to an army which, kept in constant and full use of its powers, is able to put up a good defense against its enemies. But suppose such an army were not systematically employed but took its ease in comfortable barracks and never exercised its warlike functions. Then an attack would decimate it. So the teeth have lost their resistance and so they capitulate to the onslaughts of their enemies.

Fewer and Smaller Teeth.

We may see this perhaps more clearly by examining the toughened teeth of anthropoids and early man. Of course, decay is not completely unknown even among these creatures, but it is rare. The third molars do in most cases erupt complete and sound, and the position and alignment of the teeth in their serried arches would delight the heart of an orthodontist, accustomed to the misshapen jaws of his patients. Even among present-day Eskimo who alone among living people make full use of their teeth the same beauty of dentition is present. From the primates to modern man we perceive a progressive recession of the jaws, a decrease in the size of teeth, a loss in number, and an increase in maleruptions.

We are now in the position to predict the future condition of the teeth of our gradually emerging man. Since it is improbable that we shall return to the tough resistant food on which our predecessors thrived, the chances are that our dentitions will continue to deteriorate. Future man will have lost his third molars, many of them will also show reduced or absent lateral incisors. The jaws will be smaller and what teeth are present will be diminished in size.

This predicted diminution of the size of the jaws and the teeth goes hand in hand with a reduction in the muscle masses which control the masticatory movements of the mandible. Since the cheek bones and their lateral arches serve to enclose these muscles and to take up the pressure created in chewing it is apparent with a less vigorous mastication and a decrease in the muscles mass that the facial parts will likewise undergo a modification. "Homo futurus" will have, therefore, in addition to his other characteristics, a relatively smaller face.

I mentioned previously that the skull base has shown a marked decrease in modern man. There is a good architectural reason for this. The base of the skull is intimately associated with the face which is linked to it. In fact, it might better be said that the base of the skull is determined by the needs of the facial structure for attachment. Since it is well known that the face has gradually become reduced in length and in horizontal projection, it follows that its field of attachment on the skull base has shown a correlated reduction. Other things being equal, a shorter carnial base means a rounder head. But the decreasing

length of the skull base and its facial attachment has another significance here. It calls attention to the marked recession of the face which is so definite in man's phylogeny. In the primates the jaws project like a muzzle and are labelled prognathic. But in modern Europeans the profile of the jaws has receded to a vertical line dropped from the roots of the nose, a condition known as orthonathism. From what has been prophesied already for the man of the future it is clear that this recession will be emphasized to an even greater degree.

Let us turn to another attribute of our average man of 500,000 years from now. This future being will be taller than we are. My reasons for this belief are in reality simple. It is, in the first place, well known that in many forms of evolving species there is a definite increase of size during the course of their evolution. The giant reptile forms of the Mesozoic—the dinosaurs, the brontosaurus, and their relatives—all began as small forms and gradually put on weight. One of these ponderous creatures might well have looked back to its phylogenetic youth and sung with sadness:—

"Fading is the taper waist,
Shapeless grows the shapely limb,
And although severely laced,
Spreading is the figure trim;
Stouter than I used to be,
Still more corpulent grow I.
There will be too much of me
In the coming bye and bye
There will be too much of me
In the coming bye and bye."

Indeed this phenomenon is a common one. We see it again in the phylogeny of the horse, the camel, and in various other mammals. In the primates, too, the sequence runs from the small lemuroid

creatures to the hefty gorillas. Now, in man it has likewise been observed that the stature of early man is often near the upper limits of pygmy stature whereas we overtop them considerably. Projecting this trend into the future we must anticipate an increasingly taller and bigger man. But there is other evidence to support this prophecy. Everywhere in Europe and in America, where records have been maintained over a period of years, there has been a consistent accretion to the average stature. Investigators of this phenomenon have reported such an increase in Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, England, and the United States. It would be tedious to reproduce here all the figures which corroborate this general phenomenon, but we may illustrate in by a few examples. In the Canton St-Marie Vesubie, in the Maritime Alps, the average stature has increased from 155.5 cm. in 1792 to 165.0 cm. in 1872. In Norway an increase has been reported from 168.6 cm. in 1850 to 170.7 cm. in 1905. Perhaps the best illustration of this remarkable increase in stature, and the most convincing is the study of successive generations of Harvard students which has recently been issued by G. T. Bowles. Dealing with sons, fathers and in some cases grandfathers, all belonging to one class in society, he was thereby able to eliminate such factors as social and economic influences. Furthermore, there was no question here of difference in stock. The results unequivocally support the findings already mentioned. The present generation is about 3.55 cm. taller than their own fathers, younger sons are somewhat taller than their elder brothers and the fathers are taller than the grandfathers. Just exactly what is causing this no one knows precisely. None of the numerous

reasons suggested by the fertile imagination of a number of workers seem to be completely satisfactory. A fresh opinion from Switzerland proposes that the intensity of modern life stimulates the vegetative nervous system which in its turn reacts on the increase of growth. Hooten has ingeniously suggested that modern hygiene and medicine are able to nurse to maturity the rapidly growing tall children who formerly tended to be eliminated. But whatever the true nature of this change whether nervous or medical, since I see no permanent nor complete relapse to barbarity with a consequent return to a simpler life and a destruction of medical science, I therefore predict a taller man in the future. I frankly halt at attempting to estimate the number of his inches. As a prophecy this should please many of my patient readers, but I do not see it as an unmingled blessing. As far as I know, there is no reason why a taller man is mechanically a better one. As a matter of fact, a short man is probably more efficient in the use of the energy which his body creates than a tall one. But esthetically the tall men are preferred, at least among Europeans and Americans, and perhaps in a civilized nation Art should prevail.

We now have the major aspects—the high lights—of the portrait of our future man. At any rate these are all I have space to expand upon. I shall now turn to a few of the details which give character and individuality to our drawing.

If any one of my readers happens to be a chiropodist who has had abundant opportunity to examine minutely and professionally a large number of feet, he will bear me out that the little toe is frequently very little indeed. Sometimes this fifth toe even lacks a toe nail, or it may have

only the merest suggestion of one like a tiny claw.—not a flat nail. Unfortunately in this respect I cannot compare the present state of affairs with the condition of the little toe in early man because his toes are not preserved for our inspection. But we can study the toes of the anthropoid feet nearest man's the gorillas's. Here we find a well developed little toe with a complete nail. From this we deduce that man's little toe has become progressively smaller and more useless.

The loss of the fifth toe.

An analysis of the mechanics of the foot reveals why this is so. In the primitive primate foot the line of leverage in walking passes through the middle toe, which symbolized its primacy over the other toes by its greater length. In the course of primate evolution the line of leverage shifted to a position midway between the big and the second toes as a result of adaptation. In man we find that the line of leverage has remained in this position or even moved over entirely to the big toe. As a result of this greater weight bearing and mechanical functioning the big toe has grown to be the largest of all the toes with a progressive decrease in size and function as one moves to the little toe. The increasing loss of function in the little toe is revealed by the fact, which was mentioned above that in a large number of people it has degenerated to a tiny digit often without a nail or only the merest vestige of one. This suggests the probability of its future disappearance. But since nature is slow I dare go only so far as to predict that the little toe of our future man will be even littler and that in many it will perhaps be simply a suggestion of a digit. This loss of toes, however, need not surprise us, for it is a

phenomenon well known in the evolution of a number of common mammals, such as the horse, cow, camel, pig, etc.

We are now coming rapidly to an end of this portraiture, but I wish to complete the picture with a few words on the air of our future man. It is well known, or more precisely, it has been observed by some investigators that baldness is much more frequent among the highly civilized races of mankind than among the primitive people of nature. Can you, for example think of bald-headed Indian! I suppose some have existed, but it is a phenomenon as rare as a full-bearded Indian. Similarly you would have difficulty finding a bald-headed Polynesian or Melanesian. But among Europeans many of our young men at thirty are already well along the road to baldness. In India, too, this phenomenon is common. Although here I am on teacherous ground, I hazard the guess that with advance in civilization the incidence of baldness will increase, and that in the future of 500,000 years from now it will not only appear earlier but more extensively.

A Recapitulation.

Finally, we shall give our future man less body hair than he now possesses. Man varies widely in the amount of body hair with which he is covered. But among all groups he is relatively glabrous, or hairless, who when compared with the anthropoids. Indeed, it is evident that in the course of human evolution the pelt has constantly diminished. This process of depilation has advanced farther in some races than in others. The Mongoloid people, for example, are very glabrous as are the Negroes. Only the White stocks have lagged behind in this respect. Therefore, it seems but natural

to suppose that European man will continue along the line of progressive loss of body hair.

To sum up our prophecies on the future man, we may impressionistically describe him as taller than we, with a more capacious and rounder head, fronted by a more vertical and smoother brow. His face will be smaller and more recessive in profile. The teeth in his jaws will be reduced in number and will also be smaller in size. In particular the third molars, but in some cases, the lateral incisors will be absent. Caries or dental decay will continue to be a serious problem requiring constant supervision to keep in check. Some representatives of this future race will walk on four-toed feet and many will in

early adulthood have become bald. The body hair will be less abundant perhaps reaching the condition of hairlessness found in Chinese and Negroes.

These, then, are some of the characteristics which I predict for the man of the future. But in addition to these differences from ourselves, there will be many similarities, so many in fact that you would have little trouble in recognizing him as a fellow-member of the same genus. But were you miraculously preserved to that far distant future, I am afraid that you would need to seek among the phylogenetic laggards and the "primitive" people for somebody exactly like the folks back home.

H. L. SHAPIRO.
(*Natural History.*)

THE RATIONALIST'S STANDPOINT

I have been asked in this talk to say something about the religious views included under the head of Rationalism. This is not very easy, because rationalism is not itself a religion: it is an attitude of mind towards religion and related problems. I suppose you could define it by saying that it stood for the fullest possible use of reason in these matters, as against authority or revelation, emotion or faith.

It does *not* assert that these are of no value. Of course, faith and emotion are essential. The rationalist, however, says that faith must not be blind, and that emotion by itself is a dangerous guide as well as a bad argument. Authority, too, has its place, but the rationalist proclaims that authority can never be absolute,

and that it has in point of fact often been wrong. All that is rather negative. But there is a positive side to rationalism, for it believes actively in the value of human reason as the most important instrument for securing progress. The rationalist, however, is very well aware of the obstacles to reasonableness, and realises that most human beings prefer to follow their feelings or to be guided by authority. He has also learnt that reason does not mean mere logic-chopping, and that *a priori* reasoning, however tempting, is often a waste of time. For him reason means reasoning brought into the closest possible relation with the facts of experience. When facts are lacking, the true rationalist simply suspends judgment.

Historically, rationalism in one form or another has played an important part in human progress. Socrates was in his way a great rationalist, and died for his belief in reason. Rationalist tendencies were severely suppressed by the Church in mediæval times, and only began to appear again with the Renaissance and the Reformation. From then until the end of the eighteenth century, men of letters and philosophers, like Voltaire and Hume, were the chief rationalists. With the nineteenth century, however, the rise of science provided a new and firm foundation for rationalism, and the Churches had to give way over questions of fact such as the age of the earth, and over practical problems like religious tests, or secular education. Herbert Spencer, Mill, Leslie Stephen, Bradlaugh, and Holyoake are representatives of the movement.

The actual use of the word 'rationalism' in connection with a definite movement was, however, not used until 1899, when the Rationalist Press Association was founded. This body has always believed mainly in the power of the printed word. Its famous sixpenny reprints and its special series like the Thinkers Library have had a wide circulation. As a body it has always set out to combat superstition, to attack intellectual dishonesty in religious and moral affairs, and to remove arbitrary religious restrictions such as those on secular recreation on Sundays, and in its short life it has exerted a considerable effect. But I must get back to the main business of this talk, which is to put before you the general point of view of rationalism about religion.

What, then, is the rationalist's attitude to religion? Religious feeling, religious beliefs and religious organisations are

facts of experience. These various aspects of religion can be studied with the aid of reason. When this is done, certain broad generalisations can be drawn. The first and most obvious is that the diversity of religious belief and practice is almost endless—from fetishism to nonconformity, from magic, fertility rites to monasticism.

In Fielding's *Tom Fones*, Parson Thwackum says: 'When I mention religion I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England.' That is a statement diametrically opposed to the views of rationalism. But though ridiculous in this exaggerated form, something of the kind is often held:—one religion (your own, of course) is true, and all others false; and are, therefore, not really religions, but mere superstitions.

The rationalist, however, prefers to think objectively. He also finds it impossible to believe in absolute or complete truth. In this he is supported by the second generalisation which we can draw about religions, namely that they change and evolve, even those which claim to be based on unalterable revelation. Thus Roman Catholicism today is quite different from what it was during the Renaissance, or during the period of the early Church. The Christian beliefs in the Devil and in Hell have markedly declined during the last few centuries.

Why Religions Change.

The rationalist next asks what is the common element in all religions, and why do religions change? Many people would say that religion meant belief in or worship of God: others that it involves

preparation for a life after death. The facts show that neither of these answers is correct. We must find something more fundamental. The right answer, I think, would be something as follows. Religion is the product of a particular kind of reaction between certain aspects of human nature and certain aspects of human environment. Very different elements of human nature may be involved—from love to fear, from exaltation to self-abasement; but they become religious only when they are combined with that particular quality of feeling which we call sacredness.

The aspects of man's environment to which man reacts in this religious way are also extremely varied. They may be the brute facts of nature—earthquake and pestilence, birth and death, sun and rain: they may concern man's relation with other individuals or with society, with the environment of ideas in which our minds swim as fish in the sea—the current notions of right and wrong, duty, sacrifice, and so on. They are always something before which the individual feels small or helpless—because he cannot control or understand them, or because, like some kinds of beauty or joy, they are beyond ordinary experience.

The human reaction we call religion shows itself in a number of main ways. First, in the way of ritual—sacrifice, as in many early religions; special forms of worship; sacred rites like holy communion. Second, in the way of morals—practical actions. Such actions may be taboos, which have no apparent sense in themselves, like Jews refusing pork or oysters, or they may concern fundamental problems of behaviour such as sex relations or patriotism. And, third, in the way of theology—the use of reasoning to

produce a more or less coherent system of beliefs and intellectual principles about religion. Of course, these three aspects of religion overlap, but the distinction is a useful one.

Rationalism seems to me to be important for religion in the following way. Religion, as we have seen, always evolves an emotional reaction: but the way men react depends on the interpretation they give to this reaction. Take sun, storm or earthquake. Some primitive peoples believed these to be animated by divine spirit: most religions hold that they are controlled by a god or gods: many people today, while still capable of experiencing the essentially religious feeling of awe at their elemental power, regard them as purely natural phenomena. Plagues were once regarded as due to the wrath of God, while today we regard them as due to germs. Again, while some people interpret conscience as the voice of God acting on the personality from outside, to modern psychology it is a natural phenomenon, due to the forcible repression of certain impulses in early childhood.

Where rationalism helps is in the interpreting of religion. Its principle is that wherever a natural, comprehensible, or rational explanation can be found, this should be preferred to a supernatural, mystical, or irrational one. It does not deny mystical feeling, nor the possible value of mystical feeling: it is concerned with what you make of that valuable gift of emotion.

Four Interpretations of Religious Reactions.

The rationalist, looking at the history of religion, sees that there are four main ways in which man's religious have been interpreted. Two of

these lay emphasis on something outside man: the other two on something inside man. The four interpretations are, first in terms of magic power; second, in terms of spiritual beings; third; in terms of individual mysticism or a special personal way of life; and, fourth, in terms of naturalistic scientific explanation.

The first or magic hypothesis is found in many primitive religions. It ascribes a sacred but impersonal power to special objects, places, acts or ceremonies. The chief function of religion is then considered to be to control this magic influence by magical rites: for instance rain ceremonies, or fertility rites. The second, or God hypothesis, is found in most existing religions. It no longer puts the sacred influence *in* objects or actions, but *behind* them, in the shape of gods or spirits who are supposed to control the course of events. Sacrifice, worship, prayer, and communion rituals then become the chief functions of religion. The best example of the third is pure Buddhism, but it may be combined with other interpretations, as in certain types of Christianity. It lays emphasis on salvation, and salvation from within—'the Kingdom of Heaven is within us'. In general, however, it gives a mystical and not a rational explanation.

The fourth asserts that it is man who provides the element of sacredness in religion, although certain objects and situations are more likely than others to call out the religious reaction. Sacredness does not exist apart from man, any more than colour exists in objects apart from a perceiving eye or brain.

'The Hypothesis of God'

The rationalist believes that the first two interpretations are false. Magic, in

spite of the widespread belief in it which still continues, as shown by the prevalence of luck-charms and superstitions, is a pure figment of the undisciplined human mind. He also believes that gods are creations of the human mind, which has a very strong tendency to project its feeling and ideas outside itself in personified form. Scientifically speaking, God is a hypothesis about the universe and the forces of destiny and man's religious reactions to them. In science, a hypothesis often has to be given up, though it may meanwhile have served a useful purpose. The hypothesis of God was useful so long as external nature was so little under man's control that flood, pestilence, famine and the like were ever-threatening disasters, and so little understood that he was ignorant of the causes of those disasters. Today we do not seek to avert disease or famine by propitiating a mysterious power who is supposed to control them: we seek to control them ourselves, and within limits we succeed very well—certainly much better than by prayer and sacrifice. And just because we know that diseases come from material causes like germs or faulty living, we cannot ascribe their immediate control to God, and so with the advance of science God inevitably becomes more remote from human affairs. This process has continued until the hypothesis of God has lost most of its old intellectual and practical value.

The rationalist can also make certain prophecies as to the future of religion and point out certain dangers. Religion is a certain type of reaction of the human spirit to human environment. But biologists distinguish between the *external* and the *internal* environment. We are exposed to the changing external environment; but the cells of our bodies

exist in the very constant internal environment provided by our blood. With bees, again, the hive and its organised life provide an internal environment of a social type; and, similarly, the organisation of society and the framework of ideas and feelings in which we grow up constitute an internal environment for us human beings. Now the outstanding fact in human development at the present is that while we have a great deal of knowledge and control over our external environment, we have so far very little over our internal environment. Economic, legal, political, and social systems, all obviously man-made, are at the root of the present crisis. It is they which play the part of destiny today. So it is safe to prophesy that in the near future the religious impulse will concern itself more and more with this social environment. Indeed it is already doing so on a large scale. Almost every observer has commented on the religious elements in Russian Communism and the German Nazi movement. The reason these movements quarrel with established religions is that they are in a certain real sense rival religions themselves. We are witnessing the dawn of a struggle, not between science and religion, but between God-religions and social religions.

The rationalist can go further. He can draw a parallel between the early phases of social religion and those of God-religion. In early God-religions we find many crude and unpleasant features—the worship of monstrous combinations of man and beast, human sacrifice, magical beliefs, persecution, the growth of privileged castes. We also find a gradual improvement—from polytheism towards monotheism, from intolerance towards tolerance and freedom of conscience. It is evident that the

early stages of social religion are also embodying many crude and unpleasant features—witness the persecutions in Germany, Italy and Russia, or the falsification of history and anthropology to provide a Nazi theology of Germanism. We may prophesy that gradually these excesses will be purged away, but that this will take a long time.

The rationalist would like to see established a Humanist religion of some kind, tolerant in attitude, world-wide in scope. He must be prepared, however, to see religion for a long time linked with nationalist and race feeling, intolerant, and apt to set up the state as a sort of god above the individual. He must be prepared to fight against these tendencies, as the Hebrew prophets fought for their more enlightened conceptions of God against the lower conception represented by so-called idolatry.

Rationalism in the past has often played a destructive part. This destruction was necessary to clear the ground. In the so-called 'conflict between science and religion' it was inevitable that the rationalist should be on the side of science. But now we can see that this conflict only concerned one aspect of science and one aspect of religion—those which dealt primarily with man's external environment. Now it is the turn of the internal environment. It seems inevitable that this will eventually lead to some form of Humanism, and the rationalist can now play a constructive part by insisting to the best of his powers that the ideal of Humanism shall not be obscurantist or merely mystical, but truly rational, and that the cruder forms of social religion shall not be allowed to develop the same disastrous irrationality as did the great religion of the past.

JULIAN HUXLEY.
(*The Listener.*)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To,

The Editor "Reason"

Sir,

"Truth" is the bitterest, impalatable and most nauseating "Drug" in the World.

But if a dose of "Truth" is administered and digested, it will do unimaginable good to mankind.

Rationalists 'aims and objects' are to combat all beliefs, systems and customs, that cannot stand the "Test of Reason."

May I be permitted to ask in your journal the following questions?

1. What are the beliefs of Rationalists?
2. Can all Evil Unnatural Systems and Customs of our so-called Civilization stand the "Test of Reason" and be called "True Civilization?"
3. Can all systems and customs of the World's Religions, stand the "Test of Reason" and be called Adequate?
4. Is it not a part of duty of all Rationalists to combat all evil Unnatural Systems and Customs of our so-called civilization?
5. Are all worldly "Enjoyments and Pleasures" "Genuine" or "False and Unnatural?"
6. Has not mankind for ages been existing in a Fool's Paradise and wasting its fruitful hours in false strife of life's vain endeavours in making and accumulating money and worldly possessions?
7. For ages there have been and are innumerable societies and associations, (the world over) combating all Unnatural

beliefs, systems and customs, that cannot stand the "Test of Reason"—

(a) Now the vital question is whether they have in the slightest degree, come near to their 'IDEAL'?

(b) Has the world moved a step further in the slightest degree in the direction of ameliorated condition, or has it remained stationary in the old place of sorrows and sufferings, of perpetual miseries, crimes, and unrest or has it drifted rapidly and unceasingly in the opposite direction? HELL! ! !

I hope in the name of Humanity and Mankind you will be good enough to publish these questions in your journal "Reason," and oblige.

Yours

An Un-Known Reformer.

Answers.

1. Rationalists believe that man by not using his reason and common sense has been the victim of the most cruel delusions imaginable. Rationalists, therefore, reject all beliefs that are irrational. They believe things that are based on facts and evidences. They believe that irrational beliefs are, in the long run, harmful and are not conducive to happiness.
2. No.
3. No.
4. These are precisely the aims and objects of Rationalism.
5. All worldly pleasures and enjoyments are not necessarily false and unnatural. To reject all pleasures and enjoyments is pure asceticism, and asceticism is a form of insanity based on the

delusion that this world is a vale of tears. Without reasonable enjoyments and pleasures this world would be a cheerless one not worth living in.

6. *The pursuits of life suit different temperaments differently.* To live on false hopes is certainly a disappointment and a waste of time which can only be realized by their nonfulfilment. Most people live on false hopes and are not aware of it throughout life.

To make money in a legitimate manner and to acquire worldly possessions are not necessarily a waste of time. It is on the contrary a good pastime especially if one can contribute a little to the sum of human happiness by his wealth.

7. Many societies in the world have existed and many more will continue to exist to spread beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason. The remedy is with man himself; he must strive to make an intelligent use of his reason so as to lessen the evils caused by

irrationalism. Man must strive not to remain a mental slave.

(a) What Ideal?

(b) Yes, life has certainly been made more pleasant by the many scientific inventions and discoveries which have added to the amenities of life and the relief of suffering.

There were more crimes in the world, more selfishness more cruelties and barbarism when people had more faith in religion than now. It is a fallacy to believe that the world has not improved by the spread of civilization. Think what the world was 500 years ago. In a world where the struggle for existence is the natural condition of life, evil, sorrows and suffering will continue to exist despite all endeavours to ameliorate them. Religion has failed to regenerate mankind. Perhaps Rationalism by enlightening man as to the causes of these evils and how to lessen them, may be more successful.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." "*Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.*"

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

A Bombay evening paper writes, "Bandra is agog with an alleged 'miracle.' The cross on the paved steps to Mount Mary, which is one of the landmarks of the annual pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Mount, has toppled down. The news was spread that the cross fell

down on a man who was in the habit of stealing the candles and offerings left on the cross by the devotees, and last Sunday evening when he attempted to steal the candles and offerings, the cross fell on him."

"The man is then alleged to have shouted out that he was rightly punished and invoked death on himself for his crime."

The reporter, who tells this story, relates that he visited the place to find out whether there was any truth in this. All he learnt was that some Hindus were in the habit of lighting candles and decorating the cross with flowers just as the Christians of the locality are in the habit of doing. It would appear that a young Hindu who had climbed the cross to put a garland of flowers over it nearly lost his life as the upper portion of the stone cross broke and fell upon him. The cross was an old one.

It is a pity that this prosaic journalist spoilt a good "miracle" story by the simple process of verifying the question for himself. Incidentally, this modern way of settling the question has deprived the pious folk of Bandra (a small town near Bombay) of adding another wonderful miracle to the list of many with which Salsette is rich. Nothing would have pleased these Bandra Catholics more than to see a magnificent church erected on the spot and the decayed stone cross become an object of awe and adoration with crops of miracles every year. What a glorious opportunity some of these Bandra padres have lost? The pious Hindu, who was so strangely rewarded for his religious zeal, must now be sadly wondering whether Vishnu or Shiva would have been more considerate to a Christian than Christ to a Hindu.

It is reported that in Southern India ten thousand Roman Catholics went over in a body to Protestantism owing to a serious dispute over the caste question in the Church. This incident confirms

our suspicion that conversion to Christianity in India is not so much a matter of conviction as it is purely a question of social status. The convert does not care a fig to what sect he belongs so long as he becomes a Christian.

It has been frequently pointed out in these columns that Europe is rapidly reverting to mediaevalism. The latest news by the mail confirms this. It is not that people there are returning wholesale to the age of faith; far from it. The rulers in some western countries in trying to combat democracy, i. e., Socialism, are adopting measures which must lead these countries back to the Middle Ages, unless the people concerned make a strong stand against this movement which is not likely for the present at least. The bogey in those countries is Communism and Socialism, and the measures adopted to stamp these are, among other things, interference with individual liberty, persecution, death, imprisonment, torture and punishment, for holding certain beliefs. Such, at any rate, is what is taking place in Germany, Austria, Italy and Poland. For political ends, of course, the rulers of those countries would rather land their peoples in the hands of the Churches than to see their power wane.

In the Literary Guide of June 1934, Mrs. Naomi Mitchison gives a lurid picture of Catholic tyranny in Austria. The Government there is now called Christian Socialists and its chief force—the Heimwehr is entirely under the thumb of Italy and the Roman Catholic Church. It is stated that these Christian Socialists have killed, tortured and imprisoned the real Socialists. People there are compelled to become Roman

Catholics otherwise things would be too hot for them. These who have suffered most severely so far, were unbelievers. The Church of Rome is jubilant in that country and is insisting that conquered Austrian workers shall belong to it now body and soul. Anybody who wants work now on any Government or Municipal job, or with most large firms, has not only to be a member of the "Patriotic Front" but also a good Catholic and mass-goer certified by the parish priest and a member of the Catholic Trade Unions which have succeeded the real Unions. People there are so terrified that they are flocking to the churches. We shall soon be told that the Church of Rome has won a great victory over unbelief in that distracted land.

* * *

In Germany, as we all know, the persecution is of a different kind. It is not done, so far, in favour of any particular Church, but for the State. Besides Jew baiting, which is being done in the best style of Mediaeval times, the Nazis are greatly concerned with other peoples' private affairs. They actively interfere with freedom of thought and individual liberties. Most Freethought Associations in Germany have been suppressed and even books on Freethought and Science have been publicly burnt! The Vatican is trying hard to win Hitler round and before long one will not be surprised to learn that a compromise favourable to both the Pope and Hitler has been reached. Such a compromise has long ago been reached in Italy where Mussolini has handed the education of the young entirely into the hands of Catholic priests, and in many other respects the power of the Church has been consolidated in that country. After this who will deny that

the best opportunity of the Church has always been during political upheavals?

* * *

In England, too, the bogey of Communism and Socialism is no less dreaded. The Sedition Bill which is now passing through Parliament is believed by many people in England to be a grave menace to the liberty of British citizens. If it is passed into Law, as probably it will, it will be a dangerous thing there to possess books that treat on subjects that the Government do not view favourably. Freethought literature may easily come under the ban if a few bishops and titled people denounce this as likely to be prejudicial to the public.

* * *

If dictators were not out to compel people to do what they (the dictators) like, religion in Central Europe would disappear faster than one thinks. Religion, there, among the educated is suffering the same fate as elsewhere but, the restraining hands of the dictators to gain the support of the Churches may retard the natural course of things. In Germany, according to Princess Marie Adelaide of Lippe, people no longer care for Christianity. Writing in the Nordische Zeitung (Berlin) she frankly avows:—"We have no need of salvation—we are heathens." Speaking of the German women, she says: "Modern German women no longer worship the idol foisted upon them by the Churches. A redeemer outside ourselves we refuse to recognize. Similarly we reject any doctrine of sin and grace as alien to German ideals. It is the duty of mothers not to allow the poison of an alien conception of a deity to contaminate their children's souls."

Princess Adelaide rightly condemns those parents who, although seceders from the Church, permit their children to receive religious instruction, for a healthy child's need of religion is infinitesimal, and she thinks that the age requires from wives and mothers "that they shall discard all absolute religious beliefs."

* * *

The following is from World Jewry, of May 4:

"Sixteen orthodox Jews belonging to the Sabbath Observance Society were arrested in Tel-Aviv (Palestine) during a street clash with motorists while they were trying to induce them not to drive on the Sabbath. Being refused bail because they would not give an undertaking that they would not repeat their action on the forthcoming Saturday, they formed a 'minyán' in their prison cell."

Tel-Aviv was established as a place of refuge for persecuted Jews. As soon as they are safe in such a place, the first thing they do is to show their own stupid religious intolerance. The Jews, indeed, have to thank themselves for the savage treatment they have received at the hands of Christians since Christianity has come into existence. They sowed the seed of intolerance and persecution, as can be read in Deuteronomy and other parts of the Bible, and they have reaped and are still reaping the full harvest of it.

* * *

Under the heading of "Soviet and Religion, the following appeared recently in the Times of India Illustrated Weekly:—Those who think that critics of the present regime in Russia have exaggerated the way in which religion in that country is derided should see an exhibition of caricatures by the International

Entente Against the Third International. The crude caricatures shown have been taken from various magazines published in Russia and are distinguished by an unthinkable degree of profanity. Islam is attacked in them quite as violently as Christianity. If India does not realize what Bolshevism means, it might understand from this exhibition something of the ferocity with which religious practices in India would be treated if the Bolsheviks could get their way."

This is the usual bilge against Russia by the British Imperialistic press. No intelligent Indian would fail to recognize this as a dirty propaganda against the Bolsheviks. It is mischievous as it tries to raise prejudice against the Soviet by representing that Islam as well as Christianity are attacked in a manner calculating to wound deeply the feelings of the Muslims and Christians.

Many responsible and trustworthy people in England, men and women, have recently visited Russia and they deny that the Russians behave in the manner described above. Many books are appearing also denying these wild allegations. Dr. Hecker, himself a religionist, has just published a book, *Religion and Communism*, which is a study of religion under Soviet Russia. Dr. Hecker has spent fifteen years in Russia and knows what he says. Well, he tells us that Christians there pursue their customs and ceremonies peacefully. If their adherents grow less, we must look, not to vicious suppression, but to secular education and the absence of social props. The Russian youth of eighteen, he tells us, may indulge in as much religion as he pleases. When will these imperialists cease to vilify Russia?

THE CULT OF BLOOD OFFERING

A public meeting was held in Bombay last month to protest against the horrible animal sacrifices performed at Ellora and other places in India. Animal sacrifices are still a common feature of the religious practices of certain communities in India, and if the report of a Bombay paper is correct, it would appear that even human sacrifices are still not uncommon in India. A few days ago, in effect, a local paper announced that several men had been arrested for offering human sacrifices to a goddess for the success of some commercial enterprise. This, if true, is nothing else than a modified form of Thuggism, a cult which is probably not altogether dead in India. Sometime ago, a sadhu immolated a human victim to the idol of a god in the Central Provinces, and as we are writing these lines the evening papers announced that one Sheik Hanib, a Mahomedan, who sacrificed his four-year old son, in a mosque of Bhagalpur, has been sentenced to transportation for life on a charge of murder. Writing on the horrible animal sacrifice in Southern India which has shocked the whole country, the *Times of India* of a recent date says :—

"The appeal sent to the Governor of Madras by the Bombay Humanitarian League calling for legislation to stop animal sacrifices will be greatly endorsed by the public. Reports have been frequent lately of horrible cruelties practised on animals preparatory to sacrificing them as propitiatory offerings to supposedly enraged deities. The slightest visitation of plague, cholera or other epidemic is sufficient to drive the terror-stricken population of some areas in Southern

India to these orgies of cruelty in a misguided attempt to avert the disaster. It should be remembered, however, that the sanguinary practices are relics of primitive culture which have managed to survive to our own day. Ignorant people who believe in the efficacy of such devotional exercises are known to resist every attempt to forbid them."

While the above comment is perfectly true, it would be an error to believe that only in Southern India are such orgies held periodically, and that these practices are relics or primitive culture only, performed by people of low culture. As regards these blood orgies they are practised all over India. Only a few weeks ago, hundreds of goats and cocks were slaughtered by certain orthodox Hindus at Nasik and Ratnagiri to appease the goddess of cholera and plague. It was even boasted that the epidemic of plague, which had raged with some virulence at Ratnagiri, suddenly disappeared after the sacrifice of goats there. Hundreds of goats are daily sacrificed to the dreaded goddess Kali at the Kalighat temple on the Hughli at Calcutta. In India, it may be safely said that only the Vaishnavas and the Jains are opposed to animal sacrifices as a religious rite.

As we remarked in our last February number, the sacrifices of animals to propitiate God is practised by the devotees of religions other than Hinduism. The Mahomedans, for instance, every year slaughter million of goats and hundreds of thousand of cows and camels on Bakri-Id day under the belief that Allah is very pleased with the *Koorbani*, as they call it. It is also the religious practice of many

Mahomedans and Jews to slaughter a goat when someone is seriously ill and to distribute the meat to beggars. It is firmly believed that this act helps in the recovery of the patient!

During the last Bakri-Id festival in Bombay, Hakim Mahomed Yusaf Isphani, who officiated at the prayer meeting at the Oval, reminded the assembly that the festival was held in commemoration of the sacrifice of Abraham whom the Bible tells us was commanded by God to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, as a test of Abraham's obedience to him—This unnatural and immoral act is still extolled by Bible teachers as a wonderful example of Abraham's piety!

The Hindus and Mahomedans in sacrificing animals to God as an offering, whether as thanksgiving, propitiation or atonement, are doing what was once an universal practice. The Druids, the Scandinavians, the Mexicans, the Babylonians, the Hebrews, the Greek, the Romans, the Cannanites and other tribes in Asia Minor, the Egyptians, the Arabs, the Africans, the Australians, the Indians, *in fact, all used to practise human and animal sacrifices to appease and to gain the favour of the deity.* Of human sacrifice the practice was once universal; even the Hebrews did it. The Encyclopedia Britannica says: "Human sacrifices were known in ancient India and survived till late in the nineteenth century; both Greeks and Romans practised them no less than the wilder races of ancient Europe. Semites and Egyptians, Peruvians and Aztecs slew human victims; Africa, especially the West Coast, till recently saw thousands of human victims perish annually; Polynesia, Tahiti and Fiji were great centres of the rite—in fact it is not easy to name an area where it has not been known."

The Bible gives instances of human sacrifices, and Christianity, itself, is founded on the belief that the blood of an innocent human victim was absolutely necessary to soothe the anger of God on account of the sins of mankind. The story of Calvary is nothing else than that *the blood of God, the Son, alone could appease the wrath of God, the Father, and that it was necessary that it should be shed for the atonement of our sins and our redemption.* Every Sunday thousands of pulpits in Christendom remind the faithful of this "supreme" sacrifice, as the priests call it, without which mankind would be eternally doomed in Hell! Nothing, indeed, is more revolting than to hear cultured preachers dwelling on the shedding of innocent blood for the redemption of mankind, and their extolling the saving effect of the blood of the Lamb and the regenerating power of the precious blood of Christ and so forth.

It is only recently that some of the more advanced Christian sects have realized the gruesome effects of the many hymns which gloat over the spiritual revivification of the blood of Christ and the necessity to be baptized in it to be saved. They are trying to remove the same from the prayer book. These advanced Christians now also insist more on the moral and ethical doctrines of Christianity than on this sanguinary story of the crucifixion of Jesus as forming the essence of Christianity. They have also realized that the picture of God in the earlier parts of the Bible is repulsive, and they prefer to conceive God as a loving and merciful Father rather than as a cruel and revengeful tyrant. It is easy to trace the origin of the belief in human and animal sacrifices. It, doubtless, originated with the savages who imagined their gods to be exactly as they were, namely, cruel,

inexorable, revengeful, full of capricious desires and malevolently inclined. When offended, nothing but blood could appease such monsters, and as their wrath was believed to be manifested when any calamity overtook the people, it was only natural to offer them victims. The prevalence of the belief that God is satisfied and pleased with sacrifices, whether in the actual or symbolical form, shows that this primitive belief is still strong even

among people who claim to be enlightened and cultured. People believe this without in the least reflecting that it is a gross superstition which represents their God as a capricious and cruel tyrant. It is the duty of enlightened and cultured people to teach people who practise these religious cruelties that they are relics of barbarism, revolting and demoralizing.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE INDIAN TRAGEDY: FRUITS OF SUPERSTITIONS

Religion versus Morality.

A distinguished Reviewer in the Spectator of April 6 last, in the course of an article on certain grave Indian social problems that badly and urgently needed an effective remedy said:—"An alien government is *ipso facto* incompetent to undertake social reform in intimate domestic matters." I am not one of those who believe that the British Raj has been a long continuous, unrelieved calamity, but the facts and figures which I hope to place before my readers in the course of this article will conclusively show that it is almost impossible for any impartial student of Indian affairs to come to any other conclusion. In support of my case, I propose to confine myself entirely to publications issued by the Government of India, especially the last Census Report.

I am prepared to admit that personally I am no authority on the subject I am about to discuss, and that my personal authority is wholly negligible, but I do say that the authorities I am about to quote are absolutely impregnable. I will go further and say that I defy anyone

with the smallest particle of imagination to read these authorities without rising from the perusal with a mind wholly steeped in gall, and with his blood wholly frozen as a result of the unspeakable horror and the magnitude of the task that lies before the Indian Social Reformer. The evils are allowed to grow largely as a result of indifference (to put it no stronger) of the government authorities, but it is only by discharging some of this gall in the face of the public, both Indian and European, that anything can be done, and must be done, before it is too late. The evils are so "grave," so "great and so corroding," (and here again I am quoting English officials), that at this hour they are eating out the vitals of the Indian peoples.

I have already proved in the columns of many Indian papers, in the columns of the Times of India, and in English papers like the Spectator and the Manchester Guardian, on numerous occasions during the last 10 years, that at no period in India's long history have the Indian people been so afflicted with stark

poverty; at no period has the vitality of the masses of the people been as low as it is at this hour; and I have proved this by copious quotations of facts and figures supplied by European Civil Servants and Health Officers, Indian and European. But I am discussing other evils today: Evils described by the Home Member of the Government of India in 1929 as "Grave and Corroding." These shocking evils have been proved to be the direct result of idiotic superstitious beliefs and appalling customs which have thrived upon foolish religious beliefs, and which have up to now baffled the efforts of enlightened Indian Social Reformers for over a century, including the efforts of the greatest reformer in any age, namely, Mahatma Gandhi.

In addition to the efforts of priests belonging to almost every community, the chief obstacle which Indian Reformers have had to contend with is Government's appalling timidity and inertia. It will be recalled that after half a century of effort on the part of Indian Reformers, the Government, at long last, were persuaded to support an important measure, and this measure was at last passed by the Legislature. This measure is known as the Sarda Act. This was supposed to prohibit the marriage of girls under 14 and of boys under 18. The Act was passed in 1929. The immediate effects, not of the Act itself, but of action not taken in connection with it are simply staggering. There is no other word for it. Six months were arranged to elapse between the date of enactment and that on which the measure was to come into force. The priests, especially, among the Hindu and Muslim communities believing (wrongly as the event proved), that the Government at

last "meant business" about the evil of child marriage, and as these priests had been wont to draw enormously rich fees from marriage ceremonies, and the huge armies of money-lenders who provided the parents with the wherewithal, resolved that at least they would "make hay while the sun shone". The methods they adopted have been variously described. In one Province, for example, while the Government did nothing but distribute a few leaflets, obscurely worded and all in English, the emissaries of the opposite "distinguished divines" of every community had managed to circulate to the remotest villages the tidings, often announced by word of mouth to the beating of drums, that after April 1st (1930), the Government had prohibited all marriages—not, be it noted, of young girls under fourteen, but for "fourteen years", or alternatively (according to one version), that "marriage would be most inauspicious" during that period. Whatever the means, testimony supplied by Government's own officers is unanimous as to the result. All over India, at the behest of the priests, there was a veritable spate of marriages of children of all ages, from infancy upwards, so that the night in thousands of districts was made hideous with the sounds of the processions and festivities. But it is only since the Report of the 1931 Census became available in the summer of last year that the appalling extent of the havoc could be reasonably calculated. This has now conclusively shown that though the total population of India has been increased by only 10·6 per cent; *the number of acknowledged wives under 15 has increased from 8½ to 12½ millions, and the number of husbands under 15 from under 3½ to over 5½ millions, while wives under 5 years old have nearly*

quadrupled (from 218, 500 to 802,000). As to child widows, the Report showed that a remarkable decrease since 1921, (from 396,000 to 321,000) was likely to become a great increase, as a result of the fatal six months. This, indeed, had already become true of the infant widows under five years old, whose numbers had increased from 15,000 to 31,000. As the Census Report observes:—"the year that elapsed between the rush of anticipatory marriages and the taking of the Census left time for *many infants married in haste to become widows for life*," and this is "probably significant of sorrows to come" (page 221).

But this is not all. The Census Commissioner considers, (on evidence too technical to explain here) that from a million to a million and a quarter girls under 14 years of age have been returned as unmarried, as well as a large number of boys, the reason being the parents' fear of incurring prosecution for an illegal marriage. This is given as the explanation of the anomaly that had already struck students of the Census figures just published, that in spite of the practice of polygamy throughout the length and breadth of the land amongst Hindus and Muslims, and the absence of polyandry in India, these figures showed over a *million more husbands* than wives.

From the figures, it appears that, even if we allowed for an increase in the number of child marriages proportionate to the increase of the population, the number of small children hustled into matrimony during the fatal six months was not less than three million girls and two million boys. Note that this was possible as a result of a country-wide effort on the part of religious leaders

shouting far and wide that "the Sarda Act" had "placed their religion in a terrible danger."

Note further that a significant and most ominous fact also made plain by the Census Report is that this frightful increase in child marriage has been proportionately greatest among Muslims, and that their community has led the loudest outcry against the Act, although it is not even pretended that the Mahomedan religion requires or encourages premature marriage. Indeed, one frequently hears it asserted that it is a practice peculiarly Hindu, and almost confined to the Hindu community. In fact, even at the 1921 Census, the ratio of Muslim wives under 15 years old was only 4 per cent lower than among Hindus, and has now become slightly higher, the increase being greatest at least in some provinces, among wives *under ten years old*. Also there is evidence that the dreadful practice has spread to primitive tribes previously free from it.

The Sarda Act is now a "dead letter" thanks to the efforts of religious leaders in all communities. This is admitted by Government. As the Census Report of Assam candidly remarks about the belief of the opponents of the Act, who thought that the Act would be enforced. "They need not have concerned themselves, because the Act in practice is a dead letter," and "practically a dead letter," is repeated in the Reports of most of the other Indian Provinces.

What killed the Act was the opposition of the Muslim leaders and their ignorant followers. These proved themselves more fanatical opponents than even the Hindus. The official attitude soon displayed itself when opposition to the Act began to make itself manifest. It was

indicated after the first recorded prosecution under the Act. The offender, who had given his ten-year-old daughter in marriage in deliberate defiance of the Act and of the warning of his village Headman, was sentenced to one month's imprisonment—the maximum term permitted under the Act. Instantly the Punjab Government telegraphed to order the man's release. Their action was widely reported with approval in the Indian Press, though some jeered. But before that, as we learn from the Census Report, an assembly of 12,000 pious Muslims had met in the Juma Masjid, the great mosque of Delhi—centre of the Government—to witness the marriage of a boy of thirteen to a girl of nine, just *exactly four days after such marriage had become illegal*. The District Magistrate was petitioned to prosecute all concerned, but no prosecution followed for reason we can all understand (Census Report 1931.) In Madras, a pious Muslim—a munsiff—who transgressed the Act was promptly dismissed by the Collector, but was with equal promptitude reinstated with a *grave warning* by higher authority (Census Report.). The result was that all the Courts in all India followed, or seemed to have followed, the careful hints given them by usually imposing extremely light penalties. Since the passing of the Act, there have in the course of three years been only 473 prosecutions in all India, under the Act, and of these only 167 of them proved successful, and against that *over six million more child husbands and wives* exist in 1931 than in 1921.

We now come to the appalling evil itself and let us consider briefly the extent of its unspeakable horror. The best thing to do is to look at the horror as exposed in what is called "The Joshi

Report." It will be recalled that in 1891 public attention having been aroused by a large number of cases in Bengal to the intense and wide spread suffering, often death, caused by premature co-habitation and immature prostitution, the "Age of Consent," as it was thereafter called, was raised for both married and unmarried girls to twelve. By "Age of Consent" was meant "a consent to sexual intercourse. There was a terrible agitation against the Act, as usual in the "name of religion." It was a case of "our religion is in danger". But the Government on that occasion took a firm stand. Sir Andrew Scoble, who introduced it, asserted "*the right and duty of the State to interfere for the protection of any class of its subjects where a proved necessity existed*", and to those pious leaders of various communities who appealed to "Queen Victoria's Pledge" to "pay due regard to the ancient rights, usages, and customs of India, the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, himself, very properly replied by saying that the Queen's Proclamation had always been understood by every reasonable man and woman and interpreted by the Government as subject to the reservation that—"in all cases where *demands preferred in the name of religion*, would lead to practices inconsistent with individual safety and public peace, and *condemned by every system of law and morality in the world, it is religion, and not morality which must give way*." Incredible as it may seem, but it is true that no systematic or serious attempt was ever made to enforce this Act either. Thirty seven years later, the Committee appointed by Government to investigate the matter actually found and reported that the very existence of a law *prohibiting consummation* of marriage before a certain age, that is to say consummation

of marriage before the age of 12, was "practically unknown throughout the whole country." (Joshi Report, page 18). The Act had been defeated because of the agitation on the part of religious leaders in the Provinces, and consequently as the Act was not enforced, it became a "dead letter" and its very existence naturally was completely forgotten.

The result of the conflict between Religion and Morality ! and in all India Religion, or what passes as Religion, is at war with progress and morality is that three and half million young girls under 14 years of age die in each generation in India in the agonies of child birth as far only as it is known. They are massacred on the altar of marriage, all because it cannot be prohibited by law passed by the legislatures, it being found impossible to enforce such laws "the religion" of the various communities being "in danger." Shame, (Ed. Reason.)

Let me now quote a few chosen examples taken chiefly from medical and other witnesses whose position are likely to carry confidence.

(1) Sir P. C. Roy (a distinguished Indian Nationalist of the University College of Science and Technology, Calcutta, Vol VI p. 225 of Joshi Report), asked if he had known of cases where girls of 13 or 14 had become mothers and suffered for it. He replied:—"It is common knowledge. It is not so rare that I should single out a few cases. I have noticed it in horror and shame that girls should become mothers at so early an age."

Dr. G. T. Campbell, M.D. (Principal of the Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi, Joshi Report Vol: I)—"I must have personally attended more than a

thousand Hindu girls for child birth at ages of 12 and three quarters to 16½..... and the awful effects of this child bearing cannot be exaggerated".

Dr. N. H. Blair, L. S. A., London, of Darjeeling (Joshi Report Vol. VI) says that the cases of serious injury to mothers are so numerous that it is impossible to make a selection, but he gives the following instances:—

(a) A girl of 12½ who suffered in labour for 12 whole days.

(b) A girl who died in labour at the age of 11 years and 10 months.

(c) A girl of 12½ who had to have her baby decapitated, and nearly died".

Mrs. Lilian Starr (Medical Mission, Peshawar—Joshi Report Vol: 1)—"In Kashmir.....many girls, aged eleven or twelve, are brought in labour to our hospital. They are often *in extremis* and quite unable to bear living children without the skilled operation of Caesarian section.....Thousands do not reach us and die in labour on the way.

Finally, let me give the remarkable evidence of two great Muslim Divines, Quazi Lahirul Huq of Dacca (Joshi Report page 68, Bengal); "He admits that girls are married at all ages, even at two and three, among the lower class of Muslims, that immediately *after puberty*, which happens at eleven or twelve, the girl is sent to the husband's house and that he is aware of girls who become mothers at 13 or 14, *but he will oppose all consent and marriage legislation as it interferes with the liberty granted by God's Law*".

The other witness—a Khan Bahadur—said that "cohabitation is very common in lower classes *before puberty* and is

considered essential by all, including the advanced section soon after puberty. He was personally aware of 4 or 5 girls who had cohabitation at ten and eleven and become mothers. He was, however, deadly against fining by law an age of marriage".

It is not possible to quote any more here. The "Joshi Committee" was all Indian, except for one British woman doctor. It is known as the Joshi Committee after its Chairman, Sir Moropant Joshi, formerly Home Member of the Central Provinces. It did its work—which covered just a year—with great thoroughness, travelling all over India, interviewing 400 witnesses, and issuing nearly eight thousand questionnaires. It exposes the sorest places in Indian

private life., and will always remain for the historian and sociologist the chief storehouse of information on its subject.

It definitely proves that Religion, or what passes as Religion in India, is opposed to morality and all human laws. To convert the whole of India to Rationalism, and in order to combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of reason, it is only necessary to start with the women and girls of India. Let them be instructed about the contents of the Joshi Report and of the manner in which millions and millions of their sisters are slaughtered in India on the altar of marriage, simply because it is—"a liberty granted by God's Law."

J. D. JENKINS.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND ?

It seems desirable to lay down some observations on the controversial question of survival after death as there always has been some conflict of ideas in the minds of those that turn their attention to it. Those that have a firm belief in the spiritual effect of exclusive devotion to a *Personal God*, as capable of giving them what is generally known as "Spiritual Salvation", may have the consolation of doing their Religious duty in life by working for it mainly by Devotional Contemplation—"Bhakti"—of the Being that is believed to grant to them what they regard as the ultimate reward.

But, some do not and cannot rationally believe that this method of spending their days only in the thought and praise of God—even if such a being exists—could

possibly secure that state of perfect peace and happiness for the Soul, which is believed to be independent of the physical body after death. This state of bliss beyond the world is taken to be the *Summum Bonum* of life in this world. Many people of purely rational thinking, cannot possibly believe that the mere praise of God, and contemplation of his attributes, be the real and right means of achieving the supposed object of realizing spiritual "Salvation" whatever its meaning may be. To many people of education and mental culture it is considered derogatory to conceive God, who is believed to be the highest and most perfect Being, as a person who is easily influenced by flattery and praise. Countless people though believe that this is the most

becoming manner of obtaining salvation. These praises and adulation are performed in different ways :—Prayers, prostration, complete and object surrender of oneself to the divine will, the repetition in a loud voice of God's name, such as the God of the Sahasranamams, (thousaad names), writing down the name of God a million times on paper and so forth. All these exercises are believed to be most efficacious to open the gates of Heaven to them. Of the consolation of obtaining so easily the greatest of man's aspiration in this world the little said the better.

Even in the case of human beings, mere reponsiveness of a patronising kind to adulation of one's own self is considered very objectionable, and a perfect Being cannot be supposed to give what is not really deserved for the mere desiring and craving with flattery. Dispensation of rewards should be mainly dependent on merits, and one who plays the sycophant **would not** get from the highest and the **most perfect** Being rewards which can only be given to those that eminently deserve them, by force of their character and conduct of the purest type.

If there is an Omniscient Being who requires no external evidence, and who can know and feel everything within himself, he does not wait for the importunate expression of desire for the distribution of rewards, but would spontaneously dispense them to those that really deserve them for the excellence of their character and conduct. It is superfluous, under the circumstances, to ask for what you deserve, and it is wicked and presumptuous to desire what you do not deserve, and to expect the rewards for the mere categorical incantations of the postulated attributes of the great dispenser of rewards.

No one who does his Duty or Dharma need fear or praise or even think of the existence of God, who must be mainly guided by the character and conduct shown by people's actions in this world, and not by self adulation and inert dependence on mere good graces. If there is a Creator of the world moving as a personal being with a body and a mind, he must have made some laws for the guidance of the people, and cannot be deemed to be looking after every creature in the world individually. These laws must be followed, without any thought of the great legislator. If the legislator also constituted himself the administrator of the entire world of vast creation, he, as a good judge, will give everyone his due. If, on the other hand, the laws are made to work out results automatically, without a personal supervision, as is reasonable to think in the case of such a vast world of living beings, man's rewards 'not to speak of punishments' are jerked out as if by a slot machine.

On a careful consideration of all the aspects in life, one is led to think either from the utilitarian or benevolent point of view, that the manifestation of right character and conduct consists in.

1. Feeling universal Love,
2. Doing the highest good to the largest community, not even being unmindful of one's own physiological and biological needs ;
3. Perfect absence of all evil propensities, incidental to inward feelings of hatred, envy, jealousy-selfishness, arrogance, consequent on the strong desire for wealth, power, fame, and all acts of self-aggrandisement

As to the existence of a personal self-conscious all-powerful Being, many say that though it may not be possible to convince any one of that existence, expediency requires the assumption of such existence, as a belief in it would at least, by operation of a sense of fear of punishment, avoid evil or sinful actions. This is the gist of the "Spiritual Message" conveyed by no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi in his gramophone record. It must be realised that convention meant for expediency is not consistent with real faith. This objection is met by some religious enthusiasts with the statement that as great sages have asserted the existence as a divine revelation, it must be taken as true. This again is going into unexplorable regions, and is beyond the stage of ordinary human understanding. To postulate the existence of an omniscient and omnipotent Being to supply the practical need for a detecting and punishing authority is akin to the method followed by some anxious parents of calling for the intervention of a hob-goblin to threaten a wayward child, soon disclosing to the growing child the falsity of the threat and teaching him a lie. As children are not always children, to continue the convention of expediency is to presume that the majority in the world will ever be steeped in ignorance, with no independent power of rational thinking. The presumption is perhaps proving true as there is so much of irrational credulousness. It must be realised that what is taught to others as truth must be what is at least sincerely felt to be true, but not made to appear as true with some ulterior purpose.

The so-called religiously minded people are those that completely resign

themselves to their God. They are His men, and they need only ask Him and pray for what they want, and He would give it to them like an indulgent parent. As Bertrand Russel has said, if the omnipotent God would give what is prayed for, man may well claim part of that omnipotence to serve his own purpose.

This life of entire resignation is the chief cause of the indifference and irresponsibility so woefully displayed by the majority of the almost inert section of humanity. They say that nothing happens for good or evil in this world except through the hand of God. If the hand moves under some known laws, and not by mere whim and caprice or at others' request or pleasure, men cannot have their own way. The fact that different people are affected in different ways, in spite of prayers and resignation of themselves, would necessarily lead to the inference that for the direction of the movements of God's hand, each man is responsible in his own way. The only possible reason for making such distinctions should be the varying character, conduct and environment of the persons affected, and there can be no other possible explanation. That this must be the only correct solution of the problem of the vast differences in men's destinies is amply supported by the doctrine of "Karma" laid down by the Hindu philosophy. This is most rational and just because every man must get his due. This theory of Karma also presents some difficulties, if we turn our thoughts as to its origin, if a God has created us all.

There is another theory that the outer physical garb of every man only envelops the inner divine self. It is difficult to see

in what sense this idea is understood, but it is clear that this belief gives no credit to their God, as all the objectionable conduct of human beings, in the several aspects of their relation to the world, would then be proceeding from a physical body enveloping a divine entity. Even educated men, capable of thought on rational lines do not take the least trouble to think of the absurdities involved in their ideas and beliefs, and in their daily conduct pursuant to those ideas and beliefs. Many men of sufficient intellectual calibre drift on the great raft of life, with no oars or rudder.

Whether God, as a personal entity, metes out the deserving punishments and rewards, or whether the natural Laws of Karma work out automatically, and pronounce decrees in the practical world, the chief guiding principle must necessarily be the character and conduct of

the individuals, and if one cultivates his character in all the possible aspects it can manifest itself, in his relation to his fellow-beings and other creation, by a well regulated conduct, he need not feel concerned with God, as no man thinks of the Police or the Magistrate so long as he does not come within the clutches of Criminal Laws. The worldly sovereign bestows no favours on him for the mere asking, and if he specially deserves any for meritorious conduct, he will certainly get them in the ordinary course. So must also be the attitude of man with reference to a divine Being of perfection in all possible aspects.

May all reasonable men of culture think out the observations and benefit themselves in the right way is the request of

A WELL WISHER OF HUMANITY.

THE CURSE OF TIMIDITY

(From an article by Georges Mancel in "L'Idee Libre", Dec. 1933)

When we speak of social evils, we are in the habit of considering only physical and physiological ones, and more especially, alcoholism, syphilis and tuberculosis. Evidently these are not by any means small evils and it is certainly necessary to fight them energetically, and this is no easy task either, considering their prodigious development in present society, whose machinery becomes more complicated every day.

In my opinion, however, there are also social evils of a moral nature, which though their manifestations are less violent, are at least as harmful as those I have named above. I think one of the

most important of these is the mental disease called *timidity*, which is pregnant with evil consequences for individuals as well as for groups. What evils does it not beget, with its deep and varied manifestations!

Timidity is, originally, the fear of doing or not doing something, it is a continual hesitation, an uncertainty, a doubt about oneself, a restraint on one's character, which prevents the affected individuals from showing courage and initiative in the conduct of their lives. The diminution of Life and all its beauties by a sort of moral suicide: this is what Timidity reserves for its votaries.

Timidity reigns to-day on the Earth, silent and supreme, crushing the brain and the heart of man in its chill and supple embrace, like a vicious serpent. The monstrous fruit of the fear felt by our cave ancestors at the violence of the forces of Nature and even at its simple periodical manifestations, Timidity, which was perhaps, at the origin of society, the strongest mental sensation ever felt by man, has been transmitted from generation to generation, to the present day.

The sublime discoveries of Science have given man enormous possibilities of investigation in all fields. Fire, air, earth, water, all the elements have been progressively captured and made subservient to the needs of humanity. But man, who has so valiantly and skilfully conquered the material world, has not made any conquests worth the name in the psychical world. In that sphere, he is still lingering in those unmoral refuges called "religions."

One must recognize the indisputable fact that religious systems have so far been the only organizations that concerned themselves with the moral needs and weaknesses of men. Modern organizations which try to do this at all, do it tactlessly and ineffectively, more often disposed to deny and if necessary to fight and ridicule religions, rather than try to understand by what subtle and mysterious means these have so readily taken possession of the human soul.

Human needs are, synthetically, of two apparently antagonistic categories: material needs and moral needs, the so-called spiritual or psychic needs. The first can be largely satisfied to-day, supposing of course that material possessions are more equitably distributed than they are at present, and there is even a superabundance (this is demonstrably false. R.D.K.)

If similar superabundance existed in the spiritual or psychic possibilities of man, we should be living in the "Golden Age". Human society would then know neither wars, nor revolutions, nor famines, because what really causes these frightful social cataclysms is the want of balance caused by the immense gap between the physical and the psychical: the one being in a tremendously advanced stage and the other creeping along in lamentable poverty. And still—and this is the divine part of human nature—man intensely wants to satisfy his spiritual needs as well. Let me explain, even at the risk of a digression.

By "spiritual needs". I do not mean a liking for the mysterious, the unknown, the unknowable, the vague and nebulous religious faith which, though it represented in past ages, an interesting and disinterested attempt towards the perfectly legitimate satisfaction of psychical needs, still only provides suffering humanity with a soothing balm instead of a potent remedy. Religions only gave us crutches. Let us throw them away and use our legs. As I have said above, we have two kinds of needs to be satisfied. Let us satisfy them both along parallel lines.

The lazy mania of taking the appearance for reality and the fear—yes, the fear—of going to the root of things have led people blindfold into castes and clans and religious and political systems. They entered these cages and then were astonished to find that they lacked liberty, the liberty to go further in order to see, experience, judge, compare, understand, and succeed in guessing at last that along with the material life, there is a spiritual and moral life, which has to be lived as intensely as the other. How does it happen that we are so belated in this

matter? How is it that we know so little in this sphere? My reply is that in this sphere, we have never employed those rigorous methods which we have in officially recognized sciences. We have simply been groping about, we have talked a lot and talked at random.

Even to-day, the man who has, voluntarily or accidentally, escaped from religious tutelage and proclaims that all religions are humbug and that the sphere of invisible things does not exist, considers himself a strong-headed man. But this is only an assertion, not a proof. It is easy to affirm or deny without proof. Here the believer and the unbeliever are on the same level, though they may not be aware of it.

I leave the believer to his Church. Most of them ask nothing better. But to the honest seeker, ~~disabused~~ as to gods, I say: "Let us seek together, if you don't mind. Salvation is in ourselves, not outside. Here is a starting point for our research. Happiness is not Beyond, it is here. The great and sublime mystery is not Death, it is Life."

Well, you have to give expression to Life without reserve, without limitation, in all spheres. You have been officially taught that you have five senses and you quietly accept that! Can you not imagine that observation, comparison, judgment, reasoning, imagination, intuition, logic and what not, are also senses?

Think for a moment and you will see that Imagination, that some call foolish, is one of the finest faculties of the human being, only, people hardly know how to use it. When this faculty is deranged, one becomes insane or neurasthenic, or excessively emotional or timid.

It is by the abundant resources of a powerful and disciplined imagination,

that Cæsars and Napoleons impose upon the masses, and though they have the same defects and foibles as their fellow-creatures, still, by the fascination which they exert on their feeble contemporaries, are able to pass themselves off as supermen and demigods, while they are really only ambitious and unscrupulous rascals with an unlimited power of imagination.

The wonderful scientists who, from the tenacious dreams begotten by their brains, have given birth to submarines, aeroplanes, wireless telephony, television etc., have exceeded by a hundred cubits the possibilities of the restricted sphere of human intelligence, properly so called. What marvellous faculty was it that dashing boldly into the unknown, gave them the power of divination which they have shown in their discoveries? Was it not imagination? The Faculty which can conceive in advance, without any other support than its own power, which can incessantly create something from nothing, in the invisible sphere first and then in the visible, transform, modify, destroy and create again, whence comes this faculty? From God, reply the priests. Let us pass on. God here, is an empty word, not a sensible reply. But if I do not know whence this invisible force comes, I observe, as in the case of electricity, that it exists, and that suffices for the moment.

It remains for me to find out if, like other forces of Nature, it can be provoked at will, captured, dammed, canalised, and if it manifests itself rhythmically, according to precise laws. Let us therefore examine its manifestations and we shall recognize that it is an androgynous force, that is neither masculine nor feminine, but sometimes one and sometimes the

other, and that in order to manifest itself productively, it must, like electricity, reconcile its two essential and antagonistic qualities: the positive and the negative.

I am intentionally expatiating upon the predominant value of the imagination among the faculties which, coming from the sphere of the "imponderable", constitute what we currently call the "human soul," for, after long reflection, I am obliged to admit that our sentiments of affection or antipathy, our most rigorous reasonings, our judgments, our desires, our will and even our intelligence and intuition, in short all our psychical being is conditioned by it and it alone, either for good or for evil. The believer who prays and derives from his prayer at least a moral benefit, and on the other hand the patient who unconsciously prolongs his disease by conserving in his mind the anxiety and doubt as to the possibility of a cure, both make use of the imagination, but in different ways.

One can use a knife to cut, scrape or fashion a thing as one likes, for a certain purpose, to the best of one's ability. With the same knife, one can hurt or kill oneself. The imagination may likewise lead to good or evil. Intelligently handled, it can make us strong-willed, calm in the face of danger, audacious, self-confident. Ill-managed, it may make us timid, emotional, sensitive, choleric, hesitant: in a word, incapable of doing justice to our ability. Here we come to Timidity again.

By whom has the world been governed and is governed at present? Not by the timid, surely. Not by modest people, even the most intelligent of them. Not by cowards, systematically devoured by childish scruples. The world, and the goods of the world, belong to the resolute,

who, by means of a well-ordered imagination, know how to extract the maximum practical result from their personal ability, however small, by getting rid of all the useless side-issues which always confuse the principal object.

The timid person is never a free agent. He is besieged by his inopportune and clumsy thoughts. If he is intelligent and just, sincere and loyal, all his ability and all his noblest qualities will be systematically ignored. Nobody will speak of them and as silence is the greatest contempt, he will be despised. The timid person has always been crucified in all ages.

And if we look at it more closely, who are the timid? It is the mob, the anonymous and amorphous crowd which lets itself be guided by a handful of "leaders"; which, with perfect abnegation born of diffidence, puts the keys of its Destiny into the hands of an audacious and intriguing minority or of a quasi-invisible oligarchy which, by satisfying the passions of the crowd rather than its needs, dominates it without its knowledge. In order to make it free and master of its own Destiny, the crowd must have a moral education exactly the opposite of what we have to-day. The problem is not perhaps as insoluble as it appears.

To begin with the child: We must give to the sensitive and malleable being, as soon as it begins to awake to life, about the age of seven years, a certain feeling of independence. The child must be allowed to manifest its tastes freely and supervised just enough to avoid errors and exaggerations. We must talk to it in moderation, but must not abstain altogether and leave it morally too much to itself. We must sometimes intervene in its interior life, correct its judgments

sometimes. But we must on no account assume in its presence the air of a judge or a bogey. The child must be encouraged by making it feel that where it fails to-day, it will certainly succeed to-morrow with a little attention.

When adult, make a companion of him. Do not make him feel every moment that he owes you a submissive respect, that he is dependent on you all the time and has no right to have absolutely independent, individual tastes.

If you have yourselves been brought up in the ancient, grotesquely rigid, and tyrannical principles, that is no reason for continuing that stupid, out-of-date tradition. The last war deprived many of the young men of to-day of the tutelage of their fathers in their tender years. The mother was naturally less severe and less authoritative towards them than the

father would have been. These young men, have not after all, to my knowledge, been led astray and become abnormal or unmoral. Look at them in action. They are less hesitating, less timid than their predecessors. They have a dashing and confident air which is somewhat disconcerting at times. They are doubtless neither much better nor much worse than we. In any case, I prefer them to the older generation, which kept its real character hidden. I do not, however, mean that they should serve as exclusive models for new generations. I only observe that the liberty which they enjoyed in their prime youth has not done them any harm.

(To be continued).

R. D. KARVE.

(We would not class Napoleon I, himself, as an ambitious and unscrupulous rascal. He was not that ; he was in reality, for his time, a military and political genius, much maligned by his numerous enemies.

(Ed. Reason)

DISEASE AND THE GODS

How often does a medical man hear, "Thank God, he is alright now, doctor."? I should say quite often. In practically all cases, all good things are due to God, so also are all cures. But nobody blames him for the illness.

The other day, I met a gentleman suffering from high blood pressure who had just recovered from a partial stroke. He was so full of Providence for being alive ; when I asked him why Providence did not completely prevent the stroke, he said it was done for his own good. One cannot argue further.

Though they are reluctant to attribute vicious motives to God, still they accept disease as a punishment from God for offences committed by someone or other. Him, they supplicate and try to appease.

This process of appeasement takes various forms. The educated and ignorant alike practise them. The only difference is in their grossness. Some months back we read of the gruesome practices in the South of India. People drew charriots by hooks fixed in their flesh. It curdled our blood as the vision conjectured was a prolonged one of agony.

Victims have been killed as sacrifices, but instantaneous death does not shock us as much by its cruelty. The ancient gods all wanted blood. Some of them were inclined to be cannibalistic as they wanted the blood of their children born to human beings or of the children of the latter. Others were satisfied with less. It has always been the sacrifice of A to save B to Z.

At the beginning of the month, we read that a huge holocaust was offered at Ellore to propitiate the goddess of small-pox. A number of animals were killed. We felt the greater need of propaganda so far as preventive medicine was concerned. Vaccination, in spite of all the anti-vaccinationists have to say against it, has been proved to be the only reliable method of protection against small-pox. But in the case of the person who believes small-pox to be a visitation of a particular goddess, vaccination must be a crime as it is stabbing the goddess in the back. The only rational method is offering her sacrifice and flattering her. The vanity of these gods outshines the proverbial vanity of woman.

Mr. Sarat Chandra Mitra in a paper read before the Bombay Anthropological Society says that "Sitala is regarded as a deity presiding over small-pox, in which form all Hindus from Brahmans to Dhonds worship her. In Eastern India, when a person is stricken with small-pox, a piece of ground near him is smeared with cow-dung and on it a fire is lit. A mali (small-pox doctor) is called who sings songs in honour of the goddess, while the patient is given sweetmeats to eat and is fanned with the twig of the neem tree which is sacred to Sitala." The Bombay roads and Chowpatty sea-face tell you the remaining tale.

Doctors in Bombay will tell you that the moment the rash is seen on the body, their advice is not sought. Neem leaves are tied to the door post and all the instructions mentioned in the books of old to prevent spread of infection are carried out. In some places, on a particular day, 13th day in the case of small-pox, the patient is given a holy bath, whatever may be his condition. No one shall cross over the waste water from the bath, very sensible perhaps. After the bath he is given a good meal with fine dishes. During all these days, no food cooked in the house is seasoned with oil or ghee as it is supposed to have a deleterious effect on the evolution of the case. One can perhaps excuse an ignorant coolie following all these restrictions. He knows nothing better. But to find educated people doing this certainly makes the outlook a very dejecting one.

Small-pox in the unvaccinated generally assumes a virulent form. Measles in children brings serious complications. It is true that many times a doctor is called in when the case assumes a grave aspect. Even then the doctor's treatment and instructions are modified by an old woman or old man whose only qualification is that they were born before the doctor, and have been born with a heavy quota of adhesive plaster because of which they are still stuck to old ideas.

It is in epidemic times that prayers and supplications to gods assume vast proportions. Mitra says that Bigher Mai is regarded as an attendant of Kali and is worshipped at cross roads on the outbreak of an epidemic, a pit being dug in the ground there, filled with incense and sweetmeats and set alight while the godling's praise is sung. At Patna another form of Kali worship is performed

in the shape of a procession at epidemic time in which incense is wafted from an affected village to the next, and so on, right to Calcutta.

In towns where Catholics predominate and in other Catholic communities, a procession is taken round with a statue of St. Roch who is in charge of plague in the heavenly pantheon. He is said to have worked amidst plague stricken people, and as a tribute to his practical experience he is nominated the plague saint. I am not aware that has he any influence over cholera and small-pox, though I know in some villages the same saint is taken round probably on the feeling that all the three are infectious diseases. Though anyone can study epidemiology and anticipate certain epidemics; though the prophylactic use of vaccines, sera and vaccination, along with other hygienic measures, have been the only cures that have ameliorated the lot of the people, still these very people will look up to these religious practices for protection. Temples and churches are filled; medals and cords are sold in abundance till the epidemic has spent its force. After that comes a great thanksgiving, an expression of gratitude that it has not been worse, and that God has ultimately relented. Does he really deserve any thanks at all?

If that is with epidemics, it is no better with individual cases. One morning, a Hindoo brought a child to the hospital. This was the eighth baby; all the other seven had died in their infancy from convulsions and wasting. He was recently told that these deaths were due to the anger of the local deity whom he had forgotten to propitiate. The moment this baby was born, he offered the angry goddess a sheep. He hoped that

now the child would be safe, and to make it doubly sure he brought the baby to the hospital. But he had brought it too late; there was extensive pneumonia and other complications, the child died within twenty four hours. Nothing was of any avail. The poor man will in all probability again go to the same idol, prostrate before it in all humility, offer a fatter sheep and attempt to have one more child, with what future one does not know.

Once I was asked to see an infant getting convulsions. The child was unconscious and its mouth was full of mud. I was requested not to remove it as it was from the tomb of a very holy *pir* and was reputed to be invaluable for convulsions! The child was suffering from malaria and a few doses of quinine put it right. They might have attributed it to the holy mud, but all the same I was afraid of bits of the mud being aspirated and causing a lung complication.

Another child was under oxygen; it wanted it badly. For twenty four hours its condition was critical. The parents had tied a holy cloth round the oxygen tube! The child made a slow recovery. I was grateful to the liberal supply of oxygen; the parents to the holy cloth.

A patient of sixty got a stroke; one side was paralysed. When the paralysis is due to a thrombosis, there is a certain amount of recovery. The relatives of the patient wound his extremities with St. Philomena's cord and as power returned thanked the new saint for her intercession. I do not know why they did not tie one round the head of the patient permanently as a prophylactic.

For a Roman Catholic the efficacy of Holy Communion, the water that the

priest has touched while saying mass, holy water, water from sacred shrines such as that of Lourdes is unquestionable. During an illness in a Catholic house, it is a common sight to see holy pictures and medals pinned round the patient's bed and pillows, etc.

A doctor's daughter was down with a severe attack of typhoid. Every morning there was a stream of Brahmins coming to pray. The child's ears and mouth were smeared with holy "thirth" and ashes. For some days it was a "touch and go." The child recovered, and the gods received the thanks.

Another boy, the relative of a Mohamadan doctor was down with a bad attack of smallpox. He recovered. A Hindu deity at Bhuleshwar was offered the child's weight in *gur* !

Very often after a doctor has pronounced a case to be serious and perhaps with very little hopes of recovery, a priest is called in. He says prayers aloud asking all the relatives to join. At Lourdes, for instance, the stirring tone of the pilgrim's prayer is impressive. The Brahmin comes and recites mantras with rice and flowers. The Parsee priest sits outside and says prayers continuously. I am told that some of them are able to go over a thousand pages of prayers within a night. If that be true, one can only exclaim: what a prayer! One priest used to come with something written on a piece of paper, put the paper in water and ask the patient to drink the coloured water in the name of the Great Healer. Of course, it will be said that faith heals; quite true. In such cases, however the few that are cured count, and the many who die—well, they had no faith or God loved them so that he called them to him.

A believer is never amiss for an explanation.

Why should the gods be excused if they do not always do the right thing. If a medical man had the means of relieving the sufferings of a party and failed to exercise them out of sheer personal motives and caprices, he would be severely blamed. Then why should the gods having these powers let a person die young, when they could let him live to enjoy life? I know the philosophy.

There is another point that I have not been able to understand. It is the role that a particular locality plays in the act of healing. The blessed Virgin may work wonders at Lourdes. Why does not the same Virgin work them in London or Lucknow? Why should the healing powers of the gods and saints be so much identified with the particular localities and objects like images, bits of cloth, glass, beads, etc.?

The position of a doctor is difficult. When disease is ascribed to divinity, when infection is the visitation of a goddess, when insanity is the possession by the devil, when the delirium of a puerperal septicaemia is the possession by the tortured soul of the last wife or husband, the hands of the doctor are certainly tied. It is useless at the moment to argue and enlighten. Since prayers, amulets, medals, holy water and offerings of sheep and cattle cannot do any personal injury to the patient, it is the duty of the doctor to stay. While playing a secondary role to the priest, he will still be able to do a great deal to help the patient in his fight against disease.

One cannot forget the influence the psychic state of the patient exercises

towards recovery. A steadfast hope that he will get well is a valuable asset. Nothing offers this to the same extent as pious faith. The patient may recover; though gods and the priest may get all the credit that should not matter. The satisfaction that he has done his best and helped the patient to recover is sufficient reward.

What can one do to get rid of many of these practices. Exorcising, offering

holy water to drink, taking sick incurable patients from shrine to shrine, all these are part and parcel of their faith. It is useless attempting to work against these details. He who can ardently believe in a personal benevolent god believes in the efficacy of prayer and from there to amulets, 'thirth' and priests is not a far cry. It is this belief which must be smashed.

L. C.

THE GIFT OF FREETHOUGHT

Freethought is sometimes construed as irrational thought, as thought that is, in the eyes of orthodox and ill-educated persons, contrary to established tenets and canons of logic as they conceive it to be. But a little deeper analysis of the question will show to all unprejudiced folk that it is not so, but that it is only the spontaneous expression of the human Buddhi itself to establish its own supremacy over everything else in matters intellectual; the mere word "established" will only be a fragile weapon to drive "Reason" out of the field or to scare it into submission or silence, as the tenacious camp of convention and tradition vainly imagines. No attractive or mystifying or question-begging phraseology from the sacred (?) stock-in-trade of the orthodox people, coined ages back by well-meaning but crafty men of ancient wisdom, need frighten us into sealing our mouths against those who want to intimidate us by high-sounding and jaw-breaking phraseologies and technicalities and thereby impose on us ideas and maxims, doctrines and theories, which we cannot honestly believe in and adopt,

looked at and studied from all possible angles and view-points. Some orthodox cranks and perverts even go the absurd length of seeing in "Freethought" a synonym for the blackest of sins (?). When a thing or an institution is said to be "established" and to be holy with a peculiar halo of its own, every sane man or woman has an inborn right to dig at its very foundations and to question the very nature and character of the basis on which such an institution stands or has so long stood, and also further to examine the nature of the circumstances that surrounded and governed the rise into being of the said institution. We have also the right, inborn within us, to study, scrutinise, and to criticise fearlessly, wherever necessary in the interests of truth and sanity, the nature of the authorship thereof. If my friend, Mr. Vision, tells me that he has just seen a giant gymnast performing wonderful acrobatic feats in mid-air with no supports whatever, I am never, in order to uphold the sanity and courage and honesty of my own intellect, to take it for granted and accept it gleefully on trust, because he

happens to be one of my bosom friends. My intellect **SHOULD** have its own path to travel and **SHOULD** refuse to be unreasonably or forcibly sidetracked into a dangerous side-line of thought and action. This side-line of thought may be dangerous, because it is unknown, strange and uninviting to me. Similarly, because the authors of a particular institution, leaving apart the question of its age, etc., may be our own ancestors or others of our own blood, we are **NEVER** to approve of it and we are **NEVER BOUND** either by any infallible moral maxim to do so, unless and until we are forced by some irresistible trend of logic to recognise it as a valuable monument to human wisdom and intellectual activity. It is, of course, far easier to tread the beaten track than to think and strike out an independent line of our own. Though easier by far, the beaten track is possibly more perilous and more disastrous in the long run, why not and how not?

When my mother tells me that I should not think of starting on a journey South on Thursdays or a journey North on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and similar vague things and threats (yes, it amounts to an indirect threat, isn't it?). I have

only to exercise some patience with her and have to take it as a superstition, pure and simple, until I am convinced, if at all such conviction were possible, of its truth in practical experience. At the same time, if I chance to be a little sagacious and really intelligent, caring more for true knowledge than for cock-and-bull titbits doled out and dispensed by aunts and grand-mothers, (I say this with the utmost respect to all those are responsible for my appearance on earth as a human being) my mind will have been already set a-working on subjects similar to this and will have already gone exploring minutely all those cases* of journeys that have been previously undertaken by men or women and the immediate consequences thereof, if at all those consequences can be intelligibly connected with and attributed to the "inauspicious" days on which the journeys took place. This is not to browbeat and condemn mercilessly our ancient beliefs, but it is only an anxiety to get at stability or otherwise of their aged foundations. Can this be put down and branded off-hand as a "sin", or at least as a reprehensible habit of mind?

(To be continued.)

R. NATESA AIYAR.

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WHAT THE SILENT SCEPTIC SHOULD DO:

Mr. PHELIPS APPEALS FOR CANDOUR

*Modern Knowledge and old Beliefs: An Appeal for Candour: By the Author
of the Churches and Modern Thought. Watts.*

One of the most learned of English rationalists of the last generation once delivered himself as follows: "He who speaks in the name of reason does not ask to be believed on his own authority; he must not be called arbitrary, or subjective, for what he appeals to is the reason in others, uniting him to them, uniting all to the One." This is a very good expression of the rationalist's faith, and one to which I think Mr. Vivian Phelps, author of the book under review, would subscribe. At any rate, it is because his latest book seems to me to breathe this spirit that I find pleasure in reviewing it and in recommending it to others. Mr. Phelps thinks, as I also do, that the progress of knowledge in general, and of historical criticism in particular, has destroyed the basis of belief in the traditional dogmas of Christianity. But he is also of opinion that a great many people whose lives are no longer influenced by these beliefs for one reason or another conceal their scepticism. He devotes a special section to the Silent Sceptic, analyses his influence in society, and it is to him in particular that his appeal for candour is addressed.

The appeal is a serious and earnest one, and will no doubt meet with a consider-

able response. The writer's earlier book sold 50,000 copies. In view of the extraordinary difficulty of thought on philosophical and religious questions, and the manifest unfitness of the mass of mankind to form correct judgments there will always be a colourable excuse for those who argue that religions must be authoritarian, and that the mass of mankind had better take their beliefs on trust. But Mr. Phelps thinks, and I agree with him, that no matter how little capacity a man may have for independent judgment, it is far more important for him to exercise that little than to swear in blindly to the opinions of another. His book, therefore, attempts to give readers the material for forming opinions; and it is characteristic of its practical earnestness that its pages are interlarded with the names of books, their publishers and their prices, as well as with quotations from the writers from whose views he dissents.

The Theologian's Answers.

It is sometimes argued that we are all rationalists nowadays, and that obscurantism is a thing of the past. This I cannot accept. Take an example. Some time ago a prominent theologian undertook to answer in public the doubts of a

humble enquirer who wished to know how she could be assured that the Bible was in truth the word of God. The reply was two-fold. First, it was said, we know the Bible is the word of God because it says so. Take up the first chapter of the Bible and we read: "In the beginning God. . ." It is difficult to imagine an enquirer so humble as to be completely satisfied by such an answer. Nevertheless such answers do harm. They provoke either confusion or contempt for learned authority. The second argument was no better. It is difficult to decide whether it was more comic or more blasphemous. It was to the effect that just as people skilled in literary criticism could say with confidence of a particular book, "This is by Dickens," or "This is by Scott," so there were authoritative persons (no doubt those who shared the writer's particular creed, or heresy) who could say of the Bible, This is by God:

Mr. Phelps is surely not wrong in supposing that an appeal for candour is not yet out of date.

If I understand Mr. Phelps's earlier chapters aright, his view is that those who subject their religious beliefs to the test of reason must also hold that the universe is ultimately explicable in terms of the laws of physics and chemistry. This I cannot agree with. It seems to me legitimate to hold that Renan and Strauss had some important truths to enunciate while at the same time refusing to accept the physical and chemical conclusions of Newton and Dalton as good metaphysics.

PROFESSOR B. FARRINGTON.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

The daily papers last month reported that ugly scenes were witnessed in a mosque at Karachi one morning when a section of Daudi Bohras sought to prevent the entry of fourteen members of another section who had been ex-communicated by the High Priest for holding advanced views. The Police had to interfere.

The Bohra community is not a large one, but it is extremely intolerant. There is also much bigotry in it. The *dictum* of the High Priest is sacrosanct and few dare contradict him. There are a lot of religious restrictions on the Bohra. For instance, he is not allowed to trim his beard which act is considered to be a very grave offence and a mortal sin. A Bohra

who would shave his beard would be instantly excommunicated, and sure of a nice place in Hell. Before going there he would surely get his ribs broken by his more zealous brethren. His Holiness the Mulaji Saheb claims to be as infallible as His Holiness the Pope of Rome. Strange how similarly the minds of these religious heads work in the same groove! The Mulaji Saheb is in the happy situation that his followers take his words very seriously and that they will resort to the *argumentum ad baculum* with any of those co-religionists who dares express an opinion contrary to the pontifical decree. Happy community!

* * *

Fifty persons were burnt to death in a fire which broke out the other day in a temple in South India. It is said that pitiful scenes were witnessed; the moans of the dying mixing with the crackle of burning wood. The cause of the fire, it would appear, was the careless handling of fire balls which a devotee was displaying in order to propitiate an angry god in the temple. The god was evidently not pleased with that ceremony and he showed his anger in an unmistakable manner. Not long ago, a Catholic Church, also down South, was struck by lightning when a number of worshippers who were inside perished. Really God does not respect his own house, which is an outrage on humanity.

* * *

It is reported that a woman who was sleeping with her child at Kolhapur suddenly disappeared, and when a search was made, she was found floating in a tank close to a temple. This happened late at night. When discovered, she was uttering the words "Narayan, Narayan" (Another name for the second person of

the Hindu Trinity). It is stated that although she was floating on the water, her dress was quite dry. Conclusion:—A miracle. It is affirmed that she was carried bodily by a spirit and deposited in the Tank; probably a practical joke by the spirit. Some say that it was a dirty trick especially on a poor woman. The ways of spirits in India are passing strange!

* * *

According to the Madras Mail, Professor Hou Ti Shen of the Yen Ching University, Peking, who was in frequent touch with India for nearly twenty years declares that there was too much religion in India. "India", he is reported to have said, "has too much religion which hampers all her progress. While India was essentially religious, China was intensely social." The Chinese attitude, he said, towards India was not favourable for they thought that India was too pessimistic and was divided by religious antagonism and factions. Every sensible man knows that religion is the curse of India. Mahatma Gandhi must be realizing this now, though his own remedy is still more religion.

* * *

The Dean of Rochester, Dr. F. L. Underhill, must be a very optimistic person and very complacent at that. Speaking, recently before the Annual Conference of the Church of England Men's Society, he is reported to have found a lot of excuses for Christians who did not go to Church. So very unctuous he was! He thought that religion is not being oppressed or ignored but is simply crowded out. There were, he said, too many counter attractions. He was opposed to "stunts" to attract people to church. Was he hinting at the Pilgrimage

organized by the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury to the Westminster Abbey in which, it is said, the King and the Queen will take part as pilgrims? Though people did not go to Church, he was certain they were as sincere as those who did. All the same it was his opinion that public worship was an obligation as God was more in evidence in a Church than outside it. (This bishop evidently knows better than Jesus Christ who is reported to have said to the Samaritan woman at the well that it was not necessary to go to a temple to pray). Few will disagree with the good Bishop that, from the point of view of bishops and parsons, public worship was an obligation on Christians. Just imagine what would become of them if the Churches were to become more and more deserted. Like many of his profession, the Bishop of Rochester would find any other excuse for the indifference of Christians rather than to admit candidly that the cause of it is the loss of faith of the people in a discredited creed caused by Modern Thought.

* * *

Last month we published a very interesting article by Mr. J. D. Jenkins on the evil of Child-Marriage in India and the defeat of the Sarda Act due to the timidity of the Government of India in enforcing it as it should. This question is receiving attention in England. Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., has just published a book—Child-Marriage. The Indian Minotaur. (Allen and Unwin), in which she exposes this scandal and the timidity of the Government in the face of the widespread protest against the application of the Act which was passed to stamp out of the evil. She describes this evil as one of India's greatest social

scandals. It is sad to think that bigotry and superstition are so powerful in India that even the Government quail before them. "Religion in danger" is a slogan that makes the heart of the bravest official tremble here. The Government will do anything to pacify the orthodox once these significant words are shouted with sufficient vehemence. The country we live in!

* * *

An Indian Christian Sadhu, (holy man), one Jeevratnam of Gudawada in Madras, recently visited Poona and during his stay at the Nana Peth Presbyterian Church attracted a large number of people belonging to different communities who had heard of his miraculous powers as a faith healer. According to a report in *The Times of India*, people at Poona crushed one another one morning to get the benefit of his miraculous power. The report says that he even cured those who were possessed of devils. He had only to touch the blind, the deaf and the dumb for them to go away cured and rejoicing. Hossanah! If this man goes to France he would become a serious competitor to Lourdes. At Lourdes, the Virgin is not prodigal with her gifts. One in ten thousands is said to be the average cure, and competent medical authorities aver that not a single case of properly diagnosed incurable, organic disease has ever been cured there. Of one thing we are certain: no man or woman who has had his or her eye completely destroyed has ever been cured there. So there is a limit there to the Virgin's power; but the Holy Man in Poona is reported to have cured hopeless and incurable diseases by the hundred. A miraculous man indeed and to think he is not even a Roman Catholic!

* * *

South India, the home of Dravidians, reports a recent miracle. It is the case of a stone bull covered with brass in a temple of Shiva at Travancore which has started bleeding suddenly. The papers say that the blood oozes near its tail and the prodigy is causing a great sensation there. The blood has been piously collected and sent to the Maharaja of Travancore. The latest report says that His Highness the Maharajah, the Princes and Princesses and other notables of Travancore went to pay a visit to the Temple to see the miracle for themselves. It would appear that this is not the first time that the miracle has happened; it is the fifth time. It is stated on high authorities that this fact is so well attested that the possibility of fraud or deception is out of question. Probably the temple authorities, like the Bishop of Asoti, in Italy, must have sent the blood to be tested microscopically, radioscopically, radiographically, chemically and spectroscopically, in fact, all the known methods of scientific analysis (as was done with the blood of that Clay Crucifix by the Institute of Legal Medicine at the University of Turin in Italy) to make sure that it was the blood of a real bull. They must have seen to that at Travancore.

* * *

The bull itself is a miracle. Once upon a time, it appears, it was a living bull roaming in the fields near that famous temple. A wicked man one day wounded it, and it went immediately to lie in the temple in front of the idol of the Great God Shiva, the third person of the Hindu Trinity. The God in presence of such a great faith must have

been deeply touched, and he at once converted the bull into a stone one so that it may remain in his presence for ever. One does not doubt that in Heaven this most blessed bull must be enjoying the happy privileges of all great saints, namely, the beatific Presence for ever and ever, glorifies the Most High, sings His praise in bovine fashion. We must consult some high Hindu theologians to find out whether in the abode of the blessed holy bulls by, some divine privilege, are able to play the harp.

* * *

When clay crucifix begins to bleed and talk to praying women, when a stone bull begins to bleed, when earthquakes ruin a whole province in a few minutes, surely it will be admitted that these are signs and portents of awful things to come. Heaven, indeed, is worried over Mother Earth. What is in store? Mahatma Gandhi or Father Letellier must know.

* * *

La pudibonderie saxone as Max O'Reil once described, the affected bashfulness of certain Nordic nations is most conical at times. Mixed bathing has been forbidden in Holland. If male and female bathers are caught sitting down on a plot of grass, a shocked policeman will hustle them off before a magistrate. The only grass-sitting companion for a respectable man in Holland is a close blood relative. And if you are caught sitting with one of them, the law requires full documentary proof of relationship. One does not doubt the part the padre has played in this legislation.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: IS IT A DETERRENT?

It must be admitted that this is a very grave controversial question which always finds able advocates for and against, and that the arguments on both sides deserve the close attention of every serious thinker.

It may be broadly said that Scientists are, generally, against Capital Punishment while Jurists, as a rule, are in favour.

The former look upon crimes, not excepting that of murder, as a result of irrepressible impulses prompted in the individual by a disease of the mind, or at any rate, a mental defect due to hereditary legacy intensified by unfavourable environment and social conditions. These being not of his own making, the punishment meted to him when he has committed even so serious a crime as murder, should be retributive and not vindictive. The latter hold the view, that whatever may be the hereditary legacy of the individual, whatever may be his temperamental disposition, whether he is educated or illiterate, rich or poor, hails from the castle or the slum, every man has a free will and is responsible for his acts. It is up to him to restrain his impulses, whatever may be their origin. In other words, the Jurists do not believe in hereditary factors and do not care how they affect a criminal.

Scientists also consider the duty of the State or Society towards the individual to be most important; and when this has been sadly neglected they wonder that Society has any right at all to be shocked or horrified at a murder, and to demand the punishment by death of the perpetrator. Many thinkers believe that Society can only claim this on the principle of

"Lex Talionis" as it has done little or nothing to solve or even tackle the eugenic problem in the community, to improve the social conditions of the classes most in need of improvement, and makes no effort to educate them properly and raise their moral standard. The opponents of the death penalty also say that though it is believed to be the only deterrent to the crime of murder, yet it has in no way lessened it as can be proved by the statistics of any country. They hold, doubtless, with great force of reason, that a State which is anxious to prevent and discourage killing should not itself kill when the opportunity arises. The sanctity of human life should be sacred to the individual as well as to the State and as long as this is not recognized, it is futile to expect the crime of murder to decrease.

In order to appreciate the arguments on both sides, it may interest our readers to read the very interesting debate on the question held in New York some years ago, between Judge A. Talley, one of the ablest Judges of America, and Clarence Darrow, the wellknown American lawyer and Rationalist. The former, who has gained much experience of criminal life as a Judge of the Criminal Sessions of New York, is in favour of Capital Punishment, while Darrow, who also claims great experience in that line, is a stout opponent.

(See Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Book, No. 883).

Judge A. Talley opens the debate by affirming that the State has a right to put to death one who has violated the

law which says:—"Thou shalt not kill," and for a murder deliberate and premeditated that penalty shall be imposed. He says: "In the heart of every man is written the law: "Thou shalt not kill", Upon the statute book of every nation is written: "Thou shalt not kill", and no one offends that precept through ignorance. It is fundamental that every man knows that it is wrong and illegal to take the life of another man".

He contends that once a man has an intention to slay his mental operation is that of a premeditated and deliberate effort to kill. If that condition of mind is found to have been present when the act was committed, then the criminal must forfeit his life because he has taken upon himself to take the life of another. He asks: "Is there anything barbaric or unnatural about a sovereign State killing such a criminal?" He ridicules the idea that such a criminal should be incarcerated in a prison for life. He contends that the State does the right thing in executing criminals so convicted as a matter of protection for its citizens, in the same manner that an individual has a right to kill in self protection. He claims that the State imposes its laws with equal justice, and it is in the interest of the population that justice has a right to enforce her edicts and her mandates without question. Judge Talley believes that capital punishment is the only deterrent to the crime of murder, and without it the number of murders in America would increase fearfully. As it is, he says, America is reckoned to be the most lawless country on the face of the earth. "Do you, ladies and gentlemen", he says, "have any appreciation of the homicide or the murder figures of this country of ours,

of the amazing increase beyond all calculation that is shown year after year? Do you realize that in New York, our great Empire City, there is practically a murder every day? And we are a population of some six millions here. And in Mr. Darrow's splendid city of Chicago, with a population of about three millions, there are more murders committed there annually than there are in New York. And not only are these numbers appalling, but the increase in the annual rate is the thing that should make us pause. In twenty-eight cities from which the statistics were available, in 1906 there were 609 homicides. That leaped in 1910, in these same twenty-eight of the principal cities of our country, to 1,365. And for the period running from 1917 to 1921, those figures of twenty years ago—then 609 homicides a year—reached the appalling figure of 8,946".

Judge Talley concludes his address with the question: "Is this the time to consider abolishing capital punishment when our country is disgraced by the number of murders that are committed on our shores? I say it is the time for sensible men and women to come to a realization that there is only one way to deal with the criminal and the malefactor, and that is with certainty and severity. There is no other way in which the integrity of the people of the country or the sanctity of the law may be observed. I am in favour of abolishing capital punishment when the murderers of the country abolish the necessity".

Mr. Darrow, in reply, denies the statement made by Judge Talley that every man's heart tells him it is wrong to kill. He thinks that every man's heart desires killing. "Personally", he says, "I never killed anybody that I know of. But I

have a great deal of satisfaction now and then reading obituary notices, and I used to delight with the rest of my hundred per cent patriotic friends when I saw ten or fifteen thousand Germans being killed in a day. Every body loves killing. Some of them think it is too mussy for them. Every human being that believes in capital punishment loves killing, and the only reason they believe in capital punishment is because they get a kick out of it. Nobody kills any one for love, unless they get over it temporarily or otherwise. But they kill the one they hate, and before you can get a trial to hang somebody or electrocute him, you must first hate him and then get a satisfaction over his death." Mr. Darrow declines to follow his friend into the labyrinth of statistics. He, however, makes the significant remark that in all these States where the mortality by homicide is great, they have capital punishment and always have had it. "A logical man", he says, "when he found out that the death rate increased under capital punishment, would suggest some other way of dealing with it." He suggests some reasons why the death rate by homicide was high in Central States. "The death rate in Memphis and some other southern cities is high from homicide. Why? Well, it is an afternoon pleasure to kill a Negro—that is all about it. Everybody knows it. It is certainly ironical to hear Judge Talley talk of the majesty of law, the sanctity of life, and so forth, when his countrymen think it a mere sport to lynch negroes, hang and burn them as they like. Mr. Darrow admits that the death-rate from homicide recently in the United States and all over the world has increased. Why? The same thing has happened that has happened in the world

since time began. A great war always increases death rates. "We teach people to kill and the State is the one that teaches them. If a State wishes that its citizens respect human life, then the State should stop killing."

Mr. Darrow did not believe that Capital punishment is a deterrent; the statistics quoted by his opponent proves that it is not and never will be. He reminds his audience that in the past people were put to death with great barbarity for many crimes other than homicide, yet this did not reduce crimes. He cites England as a country where, till not very long ago, one hundred and sixty or seventy odd crimes were punishable by death. He says that this barbarous law in England was abolished at the instance of the people though the Judges and the Clergy strongly opposed its abolition!

Mr. Darrow strongly criticises the legal fiction of "premeditation." His friend, he observes, says, "Oh, we don't hang anybody if they kill when they are angry, it is only when they act premeditatedly." "Yes, I have been in Courts and heard Judges instruct people on this premeditated act. It is only when they act under their judgment and with due consideration. He would also say that if a man is moved by anger, but if he doesn't strike the deadly blow until such time as reason and judgment has a chance to possess him, even if it is a second—how often I have heard Judges say: 'Even if it is a second'? "What does any Judge know about premeditation? What does anybody know about it? How many people are there in this world that can premeditate on anything? I will strike out the word "pre" and say how many people are there that can meditate?"

Mr. Darrow does not believe that there was ever a premeditated murder in any sense of psychology of science. "There are planned murders—planned yes,—but back of every murder and back of every human act are sufficient causes that move the human machine beyond their control."

Mr. Darrow does not say that murderers must not be punished. The community, of course, must be protected. There are ways of doing it, but he does not think that capital punishment is justified in a civilized community.

Judge Talley in refuting the arguments of Mr. Darrow points out that Mr. Darrow has not advanced any single argument against capital punishment. He says that Mr. Darrow's objection to capital punishment is purely sentimental and he does not think that this sort of feeling ought to be in the way of justice. He re-affirms his conviction that the State kills in order that the majesty of justice may be vindicated, and that people who violate its laws must by the example of that killing, be deterred from taking life. He did not believe in the remedies advocated by Mr. Darrow, namely, education, improving the social conditions of people, and all that. Man, says Judge Talley, has a free-will which is a Divine gift and he must choose which is right and avoid which is wrong.

Mr. Darrow in reply does not add much to what he has already said. He reminds his audience that man is a creature of environment and the product of heredity, and crime must be dealt with in a scientific manner instead of the methods of the present day which are relics of the barbarism of the past.

Our readers will have noticed that the strongest point in Mr. Darrow's argument

is the relevant fact that despite capital punishment in America and elsewhere, the crime of murder is increasing enormously instead of decreasing. In fact, in some countries where capital punishment has been abolished, the death-rate from homicide is much less than in countries where it is in force. This seems to prove that capital punishment is not a deterrent as many think, and strengthens the conviction that a man who kills, for whatever motive it may be, does not think of the punishment before or during the act of killing. Mr. Darrow's argument that a State which is anxious that its citizens should not kill should not itself kill, is very sound. Yet what do we see in the world? A man who has climbed into power may murder hundreds of his opponents in one night, as happened recently in Central Europe, and the world is hardly shocked by it. If a half-demented individual rips open the abdomen of a poor wretch in a secluded locality, Society profess to be shocked and horrified and demand the severest punishment for the perpetrator! We also think that when a few old gangsters hold up a bank, shoot right and left and decamp with the money, that lawlessness is becoming very serious and exemplary punishment should be meted to the miscreants if apprehended. When a few thousands, armed to the teeth, invade another man's territory, shoot right and left and take possession of the country, we call this conquest and admire the conquerors who are generally awarded.

We think most Rationalists will agree with Mr. Darrow that murderers must, by all means, be prevented from doing harm, and Society must be protected. Killing him may not be necessary, as he can be adequately punished in other ways, and there is no reason why we should

perpetuate the barbarism of the past. Judge Talley says that in the States a man is seldom executed for the first offence of murder. One is glad to hear this. In England, where the law is still very draconian, they do not seem to make a distinction between the different degrees of murder. There, a murderer is a murderer, and the penalty is death. They execute even young people. Young

men of 20 and 22 years of age have been hanged in England, and when such things do happen one cannot help shuddering at the severity of the law in a country where, till not so long ago as that, a man could be hanged, and was hanged for stealing a glass of Port Wine.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE RATIONALIST IN DIFFICULTIES

One of the usual arguments of those who advocate the existence, not only of a god, but of one endowed with the qualities of kindness and goodness, is that such a conviction is bound to serve as a consolation to a large number of people when great calamities attack them and threaten their very existence. Let us examine this position a little more closely.

When difficulties make the path of life not so smooth as before, when the fun and joy of living seems entirely remote, different ways are found of consoling oneself. There is a type of people who is prone to say—"well, the ways of the Almighty are unknowable and what is my misery now may possibly be for my ultimate good. I must, therefore, resign myself to his will and suffer my pain in silence." Of course, if the sufferer is really honest in his conviction that what happens (or, in his words, what God orders) is always for the ultimate good, he may probably feel some relief from his sorrow. Whether this kind of conviction is based on any reasonable grounds is an entirely different question. For, after all, "ultimate good" is a term

that will have no end. The destruction of an individual may be good for a family, that of a family for a village or even of a whole province" for the world. That the very arrangement of things by which the misery of one should mean the happiness of another, cannot be the work of a merciful god, is a point of view, which is probably beyond the comprehension of a blind believer in God's mercy. However, granting that a person has the honest conviction about the ultimate goodness of all God's actions (i. e., of all happenings in the universe), he can find a sort of consolation in every difficulty. It must, however, be admitted, that it is based on ignorance.

There is, however, also a more rationalistic way of achieving the same object. If we trace the history of the universe, or even of this little earth from geological times to the present day, the causal development of all natural phenomena will become evident. The succeeding events in the history of the world, the evolution of life, its manifestation in various forms, the appearance and disappearance of new species, the treatment meted out by one species to another, the

behaviour of human races and other small groups to each other, the effect of forces of nature and of other forms of life on human beings, all show us clearly that they form an unbroken chain of cause and effect, without any ultimate object or goal which can be deduced from the phenomena themselves. In other words, the world is not teleological but only casual in its development.

The happenings, either in the material or the animal world, can therefore be assigned values only in so far as they affect us human beings. And even then, these values will be entirely relative to the particular standpoint of the person who assigns them. The death of a soldier during the war must have been looked upon as a great calamity by the members of his family, but probably as a good thing by his enemies, who in fact must have been instrumental in bringing about that event.

To the thinking man, it is thus clear that events in space and time are happening because of causes that have taken place, and that these events in their turn become the causes of other events to follow. It is this unbroken chain, the beginning and end of which neither philosopher nor scientist has been able to unravel, which confronts us in our every-day life. Events are neither good nor bad by themselves, they can be so only in relation to a person or persons

whom they affect. (The same applies to other conceptions of values. In a recent discussion on the obscenity or otherwise of a certain book, a statement to the effect, that obscenity cannot attach to a thing or word, *per se*, but can only exist in the mind of the observer or reader as the case may be, was strongly objected to by a writer of the orthodox school. It is quite clear that a thing or a printed word, in the absence of any living being near abouts can have no conception of value attached to it.) If then nature is obviously aimless and is neither good nor bad, the best way to console oneself in difficulties is not to rely upon the imaginary ultimate mercifulness of a problematical god but to resign oneself to the inevitableness of the same and to take the help of our fellow humans in order to prevent, if possible, similar occurrences in future. I would then say to myself:—"It is a great pity that calamity has taken place; I must try to forget it as soon as possible, get out of it, with the help of others, if necessary, and again take up my work as a useful unit in this human fraternity of mine. There is no divine help I can expect; everything that takes place is doing so without any reference to my feelings. Natural laws are neither good nor bad. They are simply there and I have got to adjust myself accordingly."—That is the rational way to face difficulties.

D. D. KARVE.

REVITALISING THE JUDICIAL OATH

At the assumption of the office of the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, His Lordship Mr. Justice J. Douglas Young made some observations towards the curtailment of Laws' delays. As perjury was the curse of administering justice in the country, and as a large proportion of witnesses in the courts swore falsely, the root of the evil is traced 'to the futility of the oath that is administered.' "It (the oath) means precisely nothing to the vast majority of the inhabitants of this country. The result is that cases are manufactured both in the civil and criminal courts, and crowds of witnesses are examined who would never be called *if forced to take an oath they fear*." While on the one hand his Lordship recommends the elimination of oral evidence by suitable alterations in the personal laws and by insisting on registered instruments evidencing adoption, partition &c, he would enjoin on the witnesses who would still be coming into courts in lesser numbers a form of oath respected and feared. "There ought to be less perjury in India than in any country in the world. The illiterate villagers, who form the great mass of witnesses, and the less educated classes generally are the very people to whom an oath they fear is a very real thing." A large section of the Indian press hails the lucky discovery as 'deserving of the fullest consideration at the hands of the Government of India.'

It is well to mark the stages of evolution of the swearing-mind, to enable us to determine whether any suggestion as to the change in its form tends to progress or is otherwise reactionary. E. A. Westermarck holds that an oath is

essentially a conditional self-imprecation, a curse by which one calls down upon oneself some evil in the event of what one says not being true. "The efficacy of the oath is originally *entirely magical* it is due to the magic power inherent in the cursing words." (The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas, ii, 118). Sir E. B. Tylor defined the oath in the Encyclopedia Britannica (II, xix, 939 b) as an "asseveration or promise made under non-human penalty or sanction." Ernest Crawley comments on this by adding that oaths can also be taken under human sanctions, and upon living persons, just as a life may be insured. (See Oath, Curse and Blessing, edited by Th. Besterman, Thinkers Library Edition, p. 41). But this overlooks the insurance office which remains a non-human agency that is expected to fulfil in the result. When the ignorant woman swears on her children, she holds out that a power beyond her will save or mar them according as her oath was truthful or otherwise.

The definition of oath in the New English Dictionary recognises the appeal to God (or to a deity or something held in reverence or regard) in witness of the truth of the statement or the binding character of the promise or undertaking. Crawley's observation that many primitive oaths have no appeal to anything 'held in reverence or regard' but are absolutely direct, there being only the personal will or wish, seems to overlook the mysterious expectancy behind such primitive mind that somehow, by means other than purely human, the oath will be fulfilled.

In the primitive mind the oath depended upon the efficacy of the magic of the spoken word, like the curse and the blessing. After the development of the supernatural religion, it depended upon such Supernatural force for its dignity, and upon the appeal to a supernatural being for its sanction. The oath has figured conspicuously in the legal process of all races, and is still in the highest civilisations a formal guarantee of truthfulness. But as Crawley observes: the ethical significance of the oath is, throughout, *personal responsibility*. "When oath gives place to solemn affirmation, the guarantee of good faith and of truth speaking is now in the moral sphere of personality; there is no more *magic or religion*." (ibid) The moral significance of replacing the oath by affirmation lies in that the witness is given the respect due to humanity, he is looked upon as an agent for good or evil, and is fixed with that ethical responsibility which is the touchstone of civilised life. If instead, he were to be coerced at the stake, on the rack, or by fear of some mystic consequence, his position is nothing superior to that of an automatic machine, to record the wishes of its employer, the trance subject to register the thoughts of the hypnotiser, rather than an independent observer giving out from his experience, fearlessly, nor having any connection with suggestion, often from interested quarters from outside. However much we may seek to improve society by such mechanical means, progress would remain in the background, nay recede further, were we to increase the process of mechanisation of the witness-box without caring for the personality that is expected to fill it. To seek to cultivate the emotion of self-respect, and personal

responsibility rather than to play upon the fear of touching the Ganges Water, and the Koran ought to remain the objective of judicial reform in the country.

That emotion of self-respect and personal responsibility raises the wider problem of education, and the growth of culture among the people. An enlightened society, and truthful public opinion have in the last resort to remain the sanctions against perjury. Illiteracy and ill-directed education are at the back of the evil more than the defect in the machinery of the oath. A belief that a person who forswears himself will lose his property and children will work only so long as his ignorance lasts. Then when he perceives that others who forswore had not been visited by such supernatural punishment, his faith begins to break away. The danger of seeking to rest morality on fear cannot be overrated. When the trick fails, a more comprehensive one needs to be designed. Speaking of medieval Christendom H. C. LEA said, "so little respect was felt for the simple oath that the adjuncts (in that case, sacred relics) came to be looked upon as the essential feature, and the imprecation itself to be divested of binding force without them". (Superstition and Force, p. 29, 1832, Philadelphia Edition.) Crawley cites Narada Smriti (xix, 248) for the Kshatriya's oath by his weapons or his horse. Nearly a century has elapsed since Sir W. H. Sleeman recorded in Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official (pub. London, 1844) 11, 116, that the most stringent oath among Hindus was that in which water of the Ganges was held in the hand. It is a commentary on Indian progress that we seem to visualise the materialisation of the spirituality of Ganges-water in the witness-box, ninety years after it was discovered;

during which period the rest of the civilised world was analysing its vapoury claims, under stringent laboratory conditions. The same official records in the same place that another form of oath was by the Hindu touching the legs of a Brahman. But, thanks to time, for priesthood is none so influential today, as oaths to be made on the priestly personal. Else the Brahmins' legs would have stood the danger of scratching.

The psychology of the oath was originally magical, passing into symbolism, as the belief in magic decayed; "when the theistic stage of religion is reached (after animism) and the god subsumes in his own person a multitude of holy lines of force, the oath is brought into connection with the God." (Crawley's Oath Curse and Blessing, Edited by Theodore Besterman p. 50). "God and his equivalents are the supreme and supernatural sanctum of the Judgments of the social organism." (Ibid p 55). The fear of magic power in the primitive animistic mind has the same value as the fear of God. Behind both is the fear of retribution. Whatever the ritual and formula of the oath, or the nature of the object with which the oath is brought into contact, *the practical sense is the conditional punishment for perjury.* (See p. 54, *ibid.*) "And from the earliest stages the community, in some way or other, has made real the supernatural penalty, either by shamanistic terrorising, or by prosecution for perjury." The old Hindus banished or fined the perjurer. The Hebrew, Greek and Roman Gods swore, as also the Hindu Gods whose *Shapatha* stood for the oath as also the ordeal (Narada Smriti, I, xviii, 243, et seq.) Kings swore on accession, and the coronation-oath is the development from the medieval Christian theory

that emphasised and brought the monarch into responsible contact with the Church. Crawley remarks that by far the most usual medium in the higher religions is to touch, hold, or kiss the sacred books of the faith. The Hindu on the Sanskrit Harivamsha (Ramayana?), the Muhammadan on the Koran, the Jew on the Hebrew Bible, and the Christian on the New Testament, the Sikh on the Granth, and the Iranian on the Avesta.

But the reaction against the oath is not a novel one. The Essenes argued that those who could not be believed without swearing were self-condemned. (Josephus, Bellum Judaicum, II, viii, 6). Christ taught "Swear not at all," Mathew v. 31) which Christendom later seeks to explain away. The Anabaptists and the Quakers refuse to take oath. The sense of human dignity dawns upon the race when it argues that it should not require any formalism to bring home to the mind the obligation to remain truthful. Crawley's objection to the Quaker argument (p. 59) as neglecting the power of ceremony, which is practically the imperious gesture of the social body, presumes the perversity of human nature requiring to be awakened to the sense of duty on odd occasions, while if let alone in its normal course, as flowing into the sea of falsehood and perjury. That is beginning at the wrong end, as if society were obliged each time to quail in its shoes, and plaintively to remind its members that they are placed in a warning-post so that they may not reveal their real selves.

If Ganges-Water and the Koran are expected to effect 'miraculous changes' none would be loth to support the experiment. But human nature is more static, and the force of gravity is greater than will justify the hope of the advent of any

such miracles, so long as our intellectual levels are not raised. And the road to rise to these levels is not leading in the way of the Ganges or Mecca, stressing further in the distance between the poles apart. It is the spread of a rational harmonic system of education that would tend to impress on the witness the social obligation to tell the truth. As for the existence of anything in the Hindu and Mahammedan religions which prevents such oaths being taken, the Laws of Manu (viii 113, 256) prescribe that the Brahmin do swear by truth, or by his own good deeds. (Also Narada Smriti, xviii, 239). That is a cultural level which is by means unenviable. But as in the case of the Christian injunction never to swear, it is too late in the day either to seek support or look for the vote in religious texts alone. We have to read them in the setting of time and circumstance. The Indian Oaths Act (1873) had been on the statute book for over six decades, during which long time, Hindus and Muhammadans were permitted to make an affirmation (S. 6) except in the rare cases when special oaths were resorted to by the parties under the procedure contained in SS 8 to 10. Ganges water, Ramayana, Koran, putting out light in the temple, are some of the forms which these challenges to human dignity assume. The recent decision of the Privy Council (53 M.L.J. p. 1 P.C.) illustrates the working of the Act. The plaintiff who undertook to accept the

denial by the defendant before the deity Lakshmi Narshinghji refused to abide by that act of the defendant, on the ground that for want of invocation the deity was not actually present in the dibba (box) when the defendant gave evidence. Their Lordships repelled the plaintiff's contention holding that the form of the oath was immaterial, and that it has been the wisdom of all nations to administer such oaths *as are agreeable to the nation of the person taking*. In the case of special oath under S. 8, their Lordships hold that neither an invocation, nor oath nor even affirmation is an essential part, that an ordinary oath or affirmation under S 5, need not be added on to the special oath, and that special ritual envisaged in S. 8 is a complete substitute for S. 5, and that the ritual is at least as solemn for the deponent, as an ordinary oath or affirmation to an ordinary witness. Apart from the religious ring in the case, it suggests the subtleties of legal quibbling that might possibly enter into the apparent holy of holies. When Ganges water comes into use one is left wondering whether its specific gravity will have to be standardised. For, after all our regard for religion, we cannot be expected to lose interest in other matters so soon. Rather, we expect that holy objects may sooner lose their hold on us than the desire for culture of dignity.

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

WHAT HAS CHRISTIANITY TO SAY TO THE AGNOSTIC ?

I propose in this address to deal in a two-fold manner with our subject. I propose in the first place to examine the main points in favour of Agnosticism which have been put forward in a recent number of "Reason", the Journal of the Rationalist Association of India.....the June, 1934, issue. The article in question is by Clarence Darrow and is reprinted from "Real America". Having shown the kind of answer that would be given to these points from the Christian position, I shall then in the second place endeavour to indicate the positive position of Christianity with regard to knowledge of God and of things that we speak of as super-natural and divine.

Let me preface what I have to say by declaring that though I think he is mistaken I have every respect for the sincere Agnostic, with his determination to face reality however hard or forbidding it may appear, with his determination not to seek shelter under the cover of any illusion, however comfortable. Living in a world that slopes away on all sides into mystery, man's deep desire is to be assured that the mystery veils a Reality which is congenial to the human spirit, a Reality which may be expressed by such a phrase as the Holy and Loving God. The human heart instinctively wishes that the words of the Poet might be true: "And from the silence comes a human voice, Saying Oh Heart I made, a heart beats here." But Agnosticism says to us, Stop; there is no such answer. There is nothing but final mystery. There is no answer to man's wistful cry. The prayer seeks an answer that it will never get; the heart seeks a resting place that it will never find. When you push

your inquiry far enough, says the Agnostic, you come to an impenetrable darkness. When you have asked your last question, the answer must be: We do not know. The Agnostic may admit the possibility of the existence of God, the possibility of realms beyond this bourne of time and space, but what he says about it is that there is no revelation, no certainty, no real knowledge of these things. Set down strangely on this planet, coming we know not whence, going we know not whether, we are surrounded on all sides by blank mystery, and of God and the things divine of which religion speaks we know and can know nothing at all. Our task now is to see what Christianity has to say to this agnostic attitude of mind.

I. Let us turn then first of all to examine the arguments with which Mr. Clarence Darrow advocated agnosticism in the Journal of the Indian Rationalist Association. I shall deal with the main points by means of a short quotation and a short comment.

(1) "*Agnosticism means the state of not knowing. You might as well ask me why I don't know about life on Mars, as to ask me why I'm agnostic about life in heaven. Of the two, I'd bet on Mars. It can be seen with the naked eye.*"

The principle in this passage seems to be that seeing is believing. But if you do not believe anything except what you can see, what verifies itself immediately to your senses, you will restrict yourself to a very narrow range of things. If you were to trust only to your eyes you certainly would never believe that the earth is round. You believe it is round because

those who are capable of judging in such matters have reported it to be round, and because you feel confident that if you personally entered into the experiences and evidences upon which their judgement is based, you would be satisfied as to its roundness. Why may not the same sort of attitude be adopted towards the men of genius in the religious realm? They are persons who claim to have experience of God, to have known the presence of a Divine life which gave new significance to all life's problems. Such claims of course have to be carefully scrutinised. But it is surely unscientific to exclude the possibility of a contact with Reality through religion, on the ground that truth must verify itself to your senses.

(2) *"If the Jew, the Christian, the Mohammedan, the Taoist, the Buddhist each chooses to believe things he can't prove, he shouldn't try to make me justify myself for not believing them."*

There is here, I think, a fundamental misunderstanding. Religion is not a *choosing* to believe things. Religion is the recognition of a fact.....namely, the fact of the human being's relation to a super-natural environment. Different religions express this fact differently, but these differences do not show that the so-called fact is merely illusion nor that agnosticism is the only reasonable attitude. There may be different theories of gravitation, but that would not prove that the conception of gravitation is destitute of real foundation, nor that we should be content to be agnostics regarding it.

(3) *"If you want to believe something you can't prove, you've got to have faith. That's why the religionists have made blind faith their cardinal virtue."*

But faith is not in its true form irrational. It is rather the out-post of reason, or the "reach that exceeds our grasp." We "move about in worlds not realised." Who are you and who am I who are here this evening talking about these high matters? It is an extraordinary affair, this human life self-conscious, rational, capable of so much, and yet so insecure, surrounded with dangers, beset with problems, and so transient, faced with death. It is so amazing a thing this human life that we have, that there must be some significance behind it all. Christianity says that the meaning has been revealed in Christ as relation to a Divine and Infinite Love; and that this being the true life of ourselves, we recognise the revelation as revelation. We know God as one who has revealed Himself. God can never be known as a thing, as an object. In knowing Him so, He would cease to be God. It is a knowing that is of the personal kind, spirit speaking to spirit. "The swift fire leaps, and instantly they understand." From the nature of the case you cannot get direct, syllogistic proof of the existence of God and of the higher environment to which man is related. But there is the reach if not the grasp of faith, and there are a great many corroborative facts within the sphere of our ordinary life. If a person makes a sincere study of the life and teachings of Jesus, he will hear God's word to him, and there will be fruits of personal and moral and spiritual consequences that will confirm that word as indeed the word of God and of Truth. Fishes come and go in the water but they breathe and therefore live by air. Mankind may be related to the super-natural environment in an analogous way. The task and ideal of religion may be to bring mankind into the right relation to his

supernatural environment. "The Supernatural means the world which manifests more than natural values, the world which has values which stir the sense of the holy and demand to be esteemed as sacred.....Part of what we experience is natural, in the sense that its values are comparative and to be judged as they serve our needs; and part of it is supernatural, in the sense that its values are absolute, to which our needs must submitThe supreme task has been to discover the true supernatural, and that means to exercise the true sense of the holy and have the right judgment of the sacred. "(Oman: The Natural and the supernatural: pp. 71-72)". Faith then is not to be called "blind faith", as if it were in opposition to reason. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, as St. Paul says. It is the apprehension of the supernatural environment in which our lives are set. Reason is right in demanding proof, but it is wrong if, in the moral and spiritual realm, it demands the same kind of proof as you can apply only to measureable and weighable material things.

(4) *"To make people believe, blindly, they've scared them with hell-fire. Then somebody got the idea of a god of love, and that proved a very appealing idea. So they've been trying ever since to reconcile their god's love with his hell-fire,"*

I confess myself agnostic regarding heaven and hell as material actualities of time and space, but not regarding the facts of which they are symbols. For in our spiritual environment it is quite clear there are facts and possibilities of sin and evil, of remorse and degradation and despair, and of recovery and redemption from these personal disasters. Man

needs a Divine forgiveness that can overcome the withering blight of sin and of a guilty conscience. It is an essential aspect of the super-naturalism of Christ that he conveys this emancipation to human spirits.

(5) *"Euclid never threatened anybody with hell-fire for not believing that the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. He didn't have to threaten. He proved it."*

But Euclid was not dealing with the world of moral and spiritual consequences. If you tell a boy that along a certain line of experience he will find strength and peace and happiness, and that along another line of experience he will find weakness and disharmony and misery, your procedure may be interpreted as a threat, for threatening consequences will be implied in any proof you can present. But how else are you to proceed?

(6) *"When science began to show up religion's claim to all knowledge and wisdom and power, people became harder to scare. So the religionists, like good merchandisers, changed their selling tactics. They've sort of given over talking about hell-fire.....Nowadays they try to seduce you into believing, instead of scaring you into the fold. Sunday schools give movies and picnics, and the clergy try to play on your desire to live for ever in a kind of eternal picnic."*

But this sort of argument does not at all prove that the world of religion is illusion or that it is something about which we can know nothing. Schoolmasters not so long ago used to try to teach arithmetic to boys with the help of the cane; now they try to teach them by

which the values of personality-(-goodness truth and beauty) subsist.

(10) "*But the other fellow builds gods and heavens and hells, theologies, law, inquisitions, devils, dogma and personal immortality all upon what he doesn't know!*"

It would be more correct to say that these things are or were the endeavour to express the meaning of that supernatural environment with which man finds himself in touch. They are the symbols of an ineffable fact to which a unique type of existence is related; the symbols of that more than natural realm of spiritual reality with which our existence as human, personal beings connects us. It is true that in the history of man's effort to express the ineffable spiritual reality in which he feels himself to exist, we find these hells and devils and other distortions. But that is not because man has simply been building empty fancies on the dark basis of his mere ignorance. Rather it is like the crude efforts to explain nature, in the days before scientific facts had been accumulated and properly analysed. We do not condemn medical science because it arose out of the dim quagmire of the witch-doctor. We do not say that the object of medical science is just such stuff as dreams are made on, because of eccentricities or follies that may have marked the history of the science. No, we say that there is an object of medical science and that a true medical science will deal properly and adequately with that object. So with religion. Its object is no mere fabrication of man's

day-dreams or night-mares. Its object is God, the subject not the object, the creator not the created; and that supernatural world of absolute values where the holy and the sacred have their dwelling. That world of the supernatural is part of man's whole environment. Truth in religion means putting man into true relation with that environment. Such a religion would satisfy man's moral nature, would not be negated by his scientific knowledge, and would have the most desirable fruits in the individual and in the social life of man.

What has religion done for the world? Has it been a blessing or a curse? Such questions are often asked today. The right answer, I think, is that religion has been the great source of progress in the world, because its idea of the holy has enabled the individual to stand against his environment. Only the absolute imperative that comes with the sense of the holy can empower the individual to oppose the pressure of social custom or the clutch of ancient habit. It is religion with its sense of the holy that sets man on the path of freedom from his enviroing world. It is Jesus with his determination of the holy of the will of perfect love who has given the true freedom. To live in Christ means essentially letting the spiritual or supernatural world manifest its true quality and thereby letting its powers and potencies come into operation which is not only consciously received, but which is consciously directed by the divinely perfect purpose which is indicated by the phrase, the Kingdom of God.

[We are obliged to our contributor for sending us this article. This exchange of views, in a friendly spirit, is very welcome as it affords a means of appreciating the other side of the question. "*Du choc des idées en jaillit la lumière*" says a French proverb. We shall comment on our contributor's refutation in our next issue.

ED. "REASON."]

THE ETERNAL UNANSWERABLE "WHY" ?

Or

A PLEA FOR RATIONAL THINKING

Philosophers and metaphysicians, savants and sages, religionists and theosophists and others of that ilk and enquiring flair have all, from early times laboured hard at the solution of certain problems that the spectacle of the universe about them has invariably given rise to and is still presenting to the progressive mind of man. The search for complete knowledge and control of forces and things that constitute the universe in so many shapes and forms has imposed a hard task on those who have sought for them to a certain extent within the limits of their various spans of life. The thirst for knowledge of things and men never ceases with the pioneers ; it engenders a further thirst for the next conquest and acquisition ; as soon as the next conquest is made and consolidated, a fresh effort is made at the next possible extension and soon. Thus is the truth-seeker's efforts at discovering more and more facts and collecting experiences from all conceivable contacts with the forces of nature and their operations get extended to wider and wider ranges, where he can meditate and satiate himself, according to his education, conviction and belief. This is how truth is born into the world out of the unceasing labour of the philosopher and the scientist. And the common run of mankind knows as much about these patient toils as we, of the educated class, know about the man in the moon. A very big gulf is yawning between, and the bridging of this gulf is

ever being attempted and never successfully achieved to a seeker's complete satisfaction. I would, if permitted, define "seeker" as one who refuses to accept as final any theory that may have been propounded for the time being to get over a particular difficulty blocking the path to further advance in the matter of investigation and research.

To illustrate—when I was a young student studying physics in the Matric class, my science teacher taught me the truth about the constitution of matter and lectured me pompously on the atomic structure of it and the molecules that are built out of the atoms. Nothing was either taught or shown to me then about the existence and behaviour of what are now called "electrons" and "protons" and so forth, and I see that the great scientist Sir Oliver Lodge has opened up a new vista of tremendous possibilities for truth-hunters to explore and ransack. I expect that the sum-total of the effects of Oliver's new theories and doctrines anent the ultimate nature and composition of what we generally call, for want of a better term, "matter" on the scientific imagination of thinkers will quite possibly be of such a nature as to revolutionise and upset many of the current theories and doctrines, starting an entirely new and refreshing game for the high-brows of science and philosophy to indulge in as long as possible without losing themselves and their pet theories prematurely.

(The discovery of electrons and protons has in no way upset the atomic theory. It has only extended it. Chemists still work quite successfully on the atomic theory.

Ed. Reason.)

So the writer's world differs, and differs vastly from the world that Sir Oliver has projected forth from his magic brain. He is consequently capable of seeing (with his inner eye) and enjoying things that are denied to me and that can be revealed only to those who forge ahead, battering down every successive " why " before coming up against the dead wall screening the unknown. Every " why " must somewhere have a " because ", although that " because " may not be within easy reach or any reach at all. This obstinate " why " is ever after the " cause " that brings out the " why ", which is no other than the effect or phenomenon that confronts us all at every turn in our journey through life. A first-rate philosopher's work is no more than a very elaborate and fine-spun tissue or fabric of so many " why's " and " because's " right through. In other words, so many shrewd queries and answers regarding the phenomena that strike the human sense at all times. This eternal " why " that rises almost instinctively in the breast of every thinking man, I mean deeply thinking man, is a sure promise of future intellectual development and always tends to ensure its sanity and solidarity, and above all honesty, which last characteristic is, unhappily, very rare amongst certain orthodox cranks and die-hards. The tendency to question and to formulate proper queries is ever there in the mind of man in far more cases than we are allowed to know; but it gets suppressed or repressed under the baneful influence of empty conventions and emptier outward profession of

faith, inspiration and intuition and so forth. The mind of a born philosopher may be likened to a storm-tossed ship that is seeking for a restful heaven amidst the tempestuous tumults and noises of roaring tides that seem bent upon overwhelming and engulfing all that come their way. The affairs and movements and activities of our work-a-day world are similar to the turbulent ocean and its indignant waves, amidst which a philosopher is to keep himself intact and serene he cannot pursue his evasive " why " and receding " because " and arrive at any achievement of comparative peace and repose of intellect. I say " comparative " advisedly, because the conquest of absolute peace and repose in a world that is still imperfect and that seems to be getting less and less so under the shaping influence of evolution is an impossibility and may be only a pious wish for all time. After all, there is not much difference between a philosopher and an ordinary man in the street, save for the fact that the former has only advanced a few steps in his line of investigation and enquiry into the ultimate truth of things and has the results (knowledge) of his labours in an ORGANISED form, readily available and accessible without much fumbling and groping, whereas the latter has that knowledge resulting from various spells of experience of actual life as lived by humanity in its daily cycles in a disconnected and incoherent condition embedded here and there in his brain cells, as the psychologist says. Science is said rightly to be organised common sense; and in a like manner philosophy may be said to be the distilled essence of all available knowledge that mankind has been able to seize upon and appropriate to its manifold uses. One gentleman

versed in Hindu "sacred" lore and literature had occasion to stay with me for a day or two in my house a few years back, and he had a mission of teaching the truths of "Bhagvad Gita" to those of the public who may care to listen to and drink in what he had to say about the sublime truths concealed in the said "Gita". A chosen few of the English-educated and philosophically-inclined among us were one day treated by him to a solemn discourse on "Creation" and "Re-incarnations" as functions of God. The Almighty Governor of the Universe. I had undertaken to organise some meetings for the "Pandit" (as a learned man is called in India) and get up also a sort of subscription list in aid of the holy mission he had had at heart. He went on spinning the thread of sacrosanct discourse finer and finer till I feared much it would snap suddenly somewhere hopelessly. Knowing that the thread would snap very soon, probably leaving most of us, in an uncomfortable and bewildered state of mind, the learned "Pandit" wheeled round to some other allied theme with an air of having made and carried his vital points on the subject he touched upon first. The lecture had then to come to an abrupt termination and questions were invited from the audience as to any doubts they may have had in the explanations and expositions of divine truths given by the lecturer. A few questions were hurled by a friend of mine at the aged but courageous "Pandit" and the latter tactfully faced them and answered them in a way that somewhat pleased the questioner and silenced him for the time being. But I, having an inconvenient tendency to fire a volley of equally inconvenient questions one after another at those persons who count upon

their numerous dogmas and positive assertions for success against timid opponents, wished to try the 'pandit' and see how far the bubble of his reputed learning could withstand any intelligent attempt at pricking it. The word "creation" caught my fancy and I wanted to learn something about the orthodox view of this great problem, having read and understood a little about the way the universe has been brought into being by evolutionary forces still at work at the back of the kaleidoscope of cosmic and development. I therefore straightway demanded to know from him what he actually meant by 'creation'. He explained that, similar to the building of a house by an architect assisted by his masons, carpenters and others, the universe we see now in such form and manifestation has been moulded and chiselled with all the necessary features about it and shot forth into space by the Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient Being we call "GOD". My mind revolted at once against this view the "birth" of the universe when there had been no man or 'pandit' to make any reliable observations and record them faithfully. I hid carefully my feelings at the time and showed a somewhat satisfied front in order to egg him on to further tooth some morsels of divine philosophy. He next explained, encouraged by my silent approval and mute applause as it appeared to him, the division and classification of plants and animals and men into so many separate air-tight compartments and their various mental, physical and other equipments according to future requirements (here is "Omniscience"). The 'pandit' did not care, nor did he seem to have taken any intelligent note of the classifications attempted and fixed by great modern philosopher-

scientists like Darwin, Haeckel, Huxley and others of that gigantic group. Being unable to contain and restrain myself any longer, I asked him point-blank what his god had been doing before he produced the universe just as a woman brings forth a child from inside her body. I immediately followed this up with yet another "What did his god create the universe out of?" The 'pandit' endeavoured to explain away by replying that god made the universe and its contents out of his own body, just as a spider spins and weaves its circular web from out of the substance in its own body. This irresistibly led to the further question as to the crying or burning need or necessity to produce a universe so self-sacrificingly at such a tremendous expense of divine matter or substance. Could this have been any divine freak or diabolical prank to fashion and create and project into limitless space a universe in embryo perhaps out of something that can only be described, in the limitations of our language and vocabulary, as an unimaginable and terrific "VOID"? Though this sort of cogent speculation is not of any immediate and practical interest to us in the art of daily living, this is how a steady, sustained and systematic discussion of philosophical themes carries one onward and pitchforks him in some very inconvenient corner ultimately. This is how even the best of the best informed men in scientific and philosophic lore get hedged in on all sides by a series of stubborn "why's", one behind the other, and how they ingloriously find themselves stick up in a hopeless mire of abysmal ignorance of things and ultimate verities, an ignorance that is at once the measure of what they have already conquered in the realm of truth and of what is yet to be chased and won in time

to come, if the chasing and winning are still possible and permissible under their sorry limitations which seem to tie them up mercilessly in a very uncomfortable knot.

It is well to beware of those mystics and other divines who profess, in season and out of season, to have had a direct communion and converse with their gods and to have won from them certain precious secrets for a cool and calculated distribution amongst all those who may have been groping in the dark in search of them (those secrets, the hidden keys to eternal or unlimited happiness) according to divine orders that are said to accompany such very very rare gifts from THE SOURCE OF ALL THINGS, THE ABSOLUTE AND SELF-LUMINOUS ONE who gets reduced and cut down, for obscure reasons, to a numberless inferior shapes and forms according to a certain set of laws we know not much of. These types of priests, pandits, mystics and recluses and anchorites are not always to be credited with thorough and transparent veracity and honesty. Most of their stories are to be discounted and discredited largely as the unconscious effervescence of some pent-up feelings which may or may not have been properly grounded on any unimpeachable ratiocinations.

I do not easily believe in them, these mystic and mysterious men of vision or vanity, and have always to take their incomprehensible statements with a very large grain of salt in order to put myself on my guard and avoid being fooled. Sometimes, it turns out that the profession of these men of "spiritual might" does never tally and coincide with their daily practice; they are not ashamed to declare one thing from the house-tops

and to observe in their own daily practical lives another thing that is diametrically opposed to their house-top sermon. Often they take shelter in their supposed superhuman achievements which are said to be some inexplicable secrets of indescribable bliss withheld from the possession of ninety-nine per cent of the human race, but strangely and darkly vouchsafed to their handful of select souls. Again, there is something, I find, in their mode of living, some shabby and miserable and undeserved suffering which cannot be reconciled with the reality of their godly attainments, if any there actually were. I have seen many of such god-intoxicated people suffering almost all the disabilities and weaknesses and groaning under a load of ordinary human inclinations and vagaries that are generally found in the lives of men labelled "ordinary." "Extraordinary" folk having and exhibiting in practice most, if not all, of the failings of "ordinary" people, how does this sound, how does it get a applauded by most of the public as something to be adored?

This is one of the symptoms of a diseased lay mind, a symptom that dies hard. Tradition and convention cut a special groove of their own uninstructed

and docile mind, and the groove unhappily tends tenaciously to persist, and in some cases to widen and deepen itself in spite of attempts at wiping it off through rational teachings rightly imparted. Habit, as in other things, becomes second nature and acquires an incredibly tremendous power that seems almost irresistible and threatens the formation of any sane ideas in the mass mind. The mass mind, it is a very curious psychological fact, is always swayed by the mystic power of a priest or pundit. This weakness of the average lay mind, which sees a world of pleasure, comfort and ease in following the dictates of another supposedly superior man, gets unfortunately exploited to the utmost, and all earthly advantage is taken of this common failing in the mass mind to launch out movements of thought and to create new creeds. Large bodies of people become unconsciously swallowed up in this huge vortex and the problem of an unending series of "why's" and "wherefore's" never occurs to them. The philosophy of reason is anathema to them; they dislike it.

(*To be continued.*)

R. NATESA AIYAR.

FREETHOUGHT IN RUSSIA

The new Russian regime abolished to some extent religious ceremonies introducing in the masses a new education and a new scope of life. All religions passed to the same level of equality, and religious education is not given to the young until 18. This is, I think, the only manner to avoid mental atrophy

caused by religious preaching largely given to children in almost every country in the world. And the authorities seem to give less importance to it without knowing that it is an obstacle to the intellectual advancement of a country.

The priestcraft has had for the first time in the world history a wonderful

lesson from the Soviet Government. They have been robbed of all temporal powers and their religious action is confined to a very limited group of persons. Freethinking is unanimously supported for it freed the proletariat from the old Christian creeds which were the main causes of their social oppression. It lifted them to a situation of clear understanding, to a situation which gives them work and food and indicates them the path the men must follow to receive his reward in this world and not in the next. This reward is a "red" house, a little farm and a quota of chickens. Russians do not believe in Mothers of Mercy who will shelter them in the life to come. Though there subsist some churches in Russia they are kept as models of fine works of architecture which may cause no harm to the Nation. Christianity is no longer the predominant religion of the State as in other countries where it is used as a political weapon. Freethought is "an important part of every curriculum from grade school up." Religion is attacked fiercely in all its forms, but not stupidly. The newspaper and the theatre, the poster and the radio, are the means by which anti-religious propaganda is carried. But above all is education, for it can mould the character of the young as to make them active and intelligent men ready to serve the Nation.

The Russian Government, contrary to others, is spreading among the masses anti-religious feelings by means of education which is obligatory and is given

free to all. Education, as the Russians think, can liberate one from all religious bigotries. The Communist Party make it a law to be an atheist before entering its ranks for it is already known that it is impossible to hold any responsible office in any political party when one is pressed by religious beliefs and dogmas. To quote Mr. Walter Lippmann: "The anti-religious attitude of the State is important because it attacks not freedom of belief (which is permitted) but in fact belief itself." (See *Fortune*, March 1932.)

If freethought were to be maintained in other countries with the same tolerant disposition as in Russia, our campaign would have gone through with greater success. But unfortunately religious ignorance and intolerance still prevail in most countries. Though our advance in crushing religious ideas is very slow compared with the mighty task we have to carry out, we must not be discouraged of our future success if we simply turn to be more earnest diffenders of the opinions we hold. We must deplore the nations that do not follow the example of Soviet Russia as far as religion is concerned.

What I have written are *facts* and it rests with the others to support is or not. I hope, however, that all the nations will, by and by, convince themselves of their great mistake not to allow freethought to be the first and foremost principle of education.

R. S. FONTES.

[While we agree that it is the duty of a State not to allow the minds of the young to be early polluted by religious teaching, we, by no means, believe it is right to persecute any body for his belief or opinion not even in the interest of Free thought. We most not be intolerant ourselves.—ED. REASON.]

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hon'ble Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

All the speakers at the Rationalist Press Association dinner held at the Trocadero Restaurant, London, in May last, made references to the serious menace to liberty, not only of individuals, but also the liberty of thought in Europe. Lord Snell of Plumstead, C.B.E., the Chairman, in urging the Association

to be still more active and vigilant said:—"New forces of reaction are raising their heads in different parts of the world. We are now faced with revolutions from the Right rather than from the Left; revolutions which mean, if they are successful, the suppression of much that this Association has stood for.

It is our duty, therefore, to continue to assert and to glorify the dignity of reason and of clear thinking, and to supply steady minds for the needs of the troubled world."

Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe, who was once the editor of the *Statesman* in Calcutta said:—"As I look over this company I see the faces of many who were present at the Annual Dinner exactly twenty years ago,that occasion was marked by a brilliant address from Prof. Gilbert Murray on Revolt against Reason. The revolt against reason in those days was something that gave most of us a good deal of concern. We saw evidences of a manifold rebellion against the spirit of toleration and discussion in which the elders among us had been brought up. We saw, as we then thought, a tide of unreason in England; a recovery of superstition in religion and morals of irrationality in artistic expression and in public life. But as we throw our minds back we should all agree that the then evidences of a movement against reason were the merest trickle compared with the rising ocean of menace which is the overwhelming fact of our world to-day."

* * *

Mr. Louis Golding, the famous novelist, Mr. J. P. Gilmour and Dr. C. E. M. Joad spoke in the same strain. The last named in a very remarkable speech said: "You have heard from previous speakers of the danger to liberty to day. I do not think that they have exaggerated that danger one iota." He particularly referred to the forces of reaction which are gathering strength in England to day. "They are in effect," he says, "trying to pass a Sedition Bill into law which if it comes into force, and if, further, the Bill proves,

as it well may, a straw to show which way the wind is blowing—a wind which may one day blow a reactionary Government into power—then not only will our Press, Our Rationalist Press, be suppressed, but the careers of Our Chairman and men like him, men who have stood for liberty and democracy and have proved their work because of liberty and democracy, will be ruled out of court and made impossible in our society."

* * *

Do liberal minded people seriously realize that here, in India also, the forces of reaction against individual liberty, liberty of thought and opinion may be one day set to work in earnest? The attempt to prosecute us in January last was indeed a move in that direction. Had the Government succeeded in having us convicted on that ridiculous charge, our Association would have, by this time, ceased to exist. It was these forces of reaction which urged the Government to prevent us from expressing honest opinion on irrational customs and beliefs here. As it is now, no one in India can freely criticize certain religious practices and the character of certain founders of religion. Immediately this is known, hundreds of fanatics will organize meetings of protest and denunciation and will urge the Government to suppress this or that and to punish this or that one.

* * *

In Canada and the Irish Free State where Roman Catholicism reigns supreme, people who dare criticize the religion and even its priests are punished. No book which criticizes that religion is allowed to enter those countries. In

land, as in Tennessee in America, many scientific books are now barred from the country. In Italy, no one dare express an opinion to which a Roman Catholic priest may take an exception, and the law there compels every one to send his children to Roman Catholic schools for education. In Germany, any one who contradicts Hitler may do so at the risk of his life. In Austria, as we pointed out some time ago, Roman Catholicism is triumphant. In Spain they made the mistake of allowing women to vote with the result that the priests soon won them round to make things unpleasant for the Republic. Even in France the priests are trying hard to get a footing again. There is no doubt that there is a serious set back in the world and no one knows what may happen until civilization takes its forward course again

* * *

One of the reasons why the forces of reaction in Europe are now so powerful and triumphant is that the masses in such countries as Germany, Belgium, Austria, Italy, France and even England are an illiterate and ignorant lot. Millions of people who form the multitude there received little or no education during the war and the years that followed it. Children between the ages of ten and fifteen during that time found their education seriously interfered with, and they grew up practically without any. A French Journal calls them "Les Goggos" and attributes all the troubles in Europe to them. They are, in effect, at the mercy of crafty leaders, priests, autocrats, dictators and tyrants. Small wonder that medievalism is again prevailing in Europe and that the Churches are triumphant.

* * *

It was announced recently that the Pope is sending Cardinal Pacelli to Buenos Aires to stem the "hysterical cults" of the Madonna in Latin American countries. Two Italian convents have recently been suppressed owing to these morbid devotions. Several Spanish books dealing with similar devotions have been placed on the *Index Expurgatorius*.

Things must be bad indeed in the Church of Rome for the Pope to be compelled to take these drastic measure. This is the second time that the present Pope has found it necessary to interfere in these matters.

But why take such measures in the Latin American countries alone? While it is true that the Portuguese and the Spaniards and their descendants are incurably superstitious, the Pope, if he is in earnest, should stop those hysterical cults in more places than in Latin American countries. His own Italy, for instance. Not only the cult of the Madonna, but those of the Little Flower of Jesus, The Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lourdes, St Rita, St. Philomena, and many other male and female saints have become a feature of the Church of Rome. Zealous priests and nuns are everywhere encouraging these devotions in a manner unknown before. The Pope is perhaps unaware that here, in India, our emotional and sentimental Indians are even more hysterical over these cults than the descendants of the Portuguese and Spaniards in South America. These cults, indeed, appeal strongly to the temperament the hereditary instincts of the Indian converts to Catholicism.

* * *

Mariolatry, by which name the idolatrous worship of the Virgin is known,

began early in the Catholic Church. The worship of Diana in Rome, that of Artemis in Greece and Isis with the infant Horus in Egypt proved a stumbling block to the new Church in those countries. Mariolatry started in Egypt where the cult of Isis was too strong for Christianity. It did not take the Church long to recognize that it would be a wise and good policy to adopt the cult of Isis under the name of Mary. It is no doubt true that every where Catholicism had to adopt the prevailing pagan customs and beliefs before it could be firmly established. Even Christmas is a pagan festival. The cult of Mary is Catholicism itself.

* * *

A Young Mahomedan Rationalist, a member of our Association, brought us a tract: "Does God Exist" issued by the Jamiat Shubhan—Al—Muslimeen, Bombay, with the request that we should comment on it. After perusing it, we do not think that it is worth while doing so. It is written by an ignoramus who advances some grotesque views as proofs to the existence of God. One is always glad to discuss this question with serious and competent people whose views are worth considering, but not the lucubration of any silly individual who fancies himself competent enough to deal with a subject that learned men find difficult to tackle. The tract should prove very interesting to Pydownee Mussulmans for whom, indeed, it is intended.

* * *

The Revd. "Dick" Sheppard, unlike many professional Churchmen, does not believe that many side attractions have captured Youth and prevented it from at-

tending the Church. He thinks that Youth has become disgusted with Christianity on account of fanatics. He believes that these fanatics have done a good deal of harm to Christianity. Once a brain has been gangrened by fanaticisms" says the Revd. "Dick" Sheppard, "there is no cure, but the greater tragedy still lies in the fact than even if that brain is calling from the side of the Angels the response will be negligible and its quality poor." There is a large number of people old and young who always flock to hear a notorious fanatic preacher speak here. According to the Revd. Sheppard though the quantity is large the quality of such people who follow this preacher must be poor. We have always thought so. But this is India and not Europe, the Youth of which the Revd. Dick Sheppard is probably referring to.

All the same, the Revd. "Dick" Sheppard must be very confident and optimistic to believe that his own skill in addressing this modern Skeptic Youth should be successful in capturing it. He believes he will soon succeed in making a real revival of Christianity. Why a revival of Christianity? A thing that is living and strong, as we are always told Christianity is, does not require any revival. It is a dying creed that requires revival.

* * *

It is stated that recently Sir Samuel Brighouse, the Lancashire Coroner, severely denounced Christian Science practitioners when summing up at an inquest at Southport. It would appear that one Honnor, a staunch believer in Christian Science, refused to permit a well qualified surgeon being called to attend him after he had met with a

serious accident in which he fractured a limb. He called instead a Miss Anna Street Marsh, a Christian Science practitioner, who prayed for his recovery without any treatment till he was dead. The Coroner said, "It makes me sad and depressed to think that many of my fellow creatures are so demented and so silly or foolish as to think if you are suffering from a broken leg some one can pray to God and cure it." Why feel sad over it; there are millions of such demented people in the world? Otherwise how could so many charlatans thrive? The Bible is wholly responsible for this belief.

* * *

Why blame the Christian Scientists only. Are not all believers in stupid miracles equally demented? What about those hopelessly incurable people who persist in going to holy shrines with the hope of being miraculously cured? The more they are disappointed, the more they are made to believe that stronger faith and perseverance will at last move heaven. Any failure is attributed to the

unworthy state of the applicant, himself and not to the deafness of heaven. Take the case of Lourdes. Though Emile Zola wrote his "Lourdes" in the form of a novel, it is nonetheless true that he gives a faithful description of what he saw at that famous place of pilgrimage in 1894. While the scene there would disgust any sane person, there are thousands who are greatly edified when they witness all the extraordinary devotions that take place there and the sight of hundreds of miserable wretches who imagine that the impossible is going to happen in their favour simply because they have faith in some imaginary deity. We hear a good deal of the power of the mind over the body which is no doubt true. All the reasonable doubts about cures at holy shrines would cease if an undoubted miracle could really happen at those places, for instance, if an amputated leg could be restored or a destroyed eye made sound again. We are, of course, confident that such an impossible thing will never occur at any shrine however holy it may be. Believers never think of this.

COMMENT ON A CHRISTIAN'S ANSWER TO DARROW.

In our last issue we published an article:—"What has Christianity to say to the Agnostic?" which we believe, was the subject of a lecture delivered in July last by the Revd James Kellock M. A. B. D., at a Y. M. C. A. Hall in Bombay, and sent to us for publication. The lecture was an attempt to refute Mr. Clarence Darrow's article "Agnosticism" published in "Reason" in July last. We gladly published the same to give an idea of the line of argument used by a certain

type of Christian in justification of their beliefs when the same are questioned by Freethinkers.

Those of our readers who are already familiar with such Christian viewpoint must have noticed that it is mostly made by certain Christians who claim to be advanced, liberal and sympathetic towards those who cannot accept the teaching of Christianity. As they differ from the old type (especially the Fundamentalists and the Roman Catholic) in

that they are not bound to accept literally what is written in the Bible, they can hardly claim to speak in the name of Christianity as does our contributor. As a matter of fact, they accept in that book what suits them and reject, what to them, appears absurd and improbable. Our contributor, for instance, has no hesitation in rejecting the popular, albeit the orthodox belief about Heaven and Hell and confesses that in this respect he is, himself, an Agnostic! Yet, it does not seem to strike him that Christ was positive on the question of Hell, and according to him it was a place of torment, full of fire, in which the damned, especially unbelievers, would suffer ever lastingly. The justification of our contributor to remain a Christian appears to be based on the following considerations:—1. Though not tied down by dogmas, he is confident that the Christian mysticism is the correct attitude to assume in this life which, according to him, is full of mystery and illusion.

2. That there is a "Reality" at the back of things which he believes to be a Loving and Holy God, and it is the purpose of human existence to search for that "Reality," and be in communion with it.

3. That, though there may be no evidence apprehended by our senses, and no demonstrable proof of its existence, certain individuals, especially religious people, experience within themselves this communion which they assert to be real.

4. That without this communion one cannot be happy and life becomes meaningless.

5. That it is unscientific to question the value of this "religious ex-

perience," and unbelievers must adopt a reverential attitude before this claim.

6. That the knowledge of that "Reality," otherwise known as a Loving and Holy God, has been also revealed to man by Jesus Christ who was himself that "Reality."

7. That there is a supernatural world which is part of man's whole environment.

8. That the object of religion is to put man in relation to that environment. In doing this, it is affirmed, religion is of the utmost spiritual value and it satisfies man's moral nature.

9. That the religious instinct is in-born in man, and the existence of many religions is a proof that it is a natural yearning in man to be in communion with that "Reality," which reigns in the Supernatural world.

10. That religion has been the great source of progress in the world; that it has set man free and we owe all our happiness to it.

When an Agnostic like Mr. Clarence Darrow, who, one presumes, has given careful attention to all these preposterous claims, challenges all these as *a priori* assumptions which the progress of knowledge has rendered untenable, a believer, like our contributor, whisks round and defies reason and evidence in the name of intuition, inner-light, spiritual perception or experience, illative sense, logic of heart and other transcendental entities, and assures the uninformed that knowledge, has not lifted the veil of mystery which he alleges surrounds us everywhere. Once a person takes this attitude, it is a waste of time to argue

with him. However, let us see how our contributor refutes the Agnostic's contention that all this is pure illusion and imagination.

It will be seen that all his arguments which probably he imagines are very crushing, are based on the *a priori* assumption that there is a "Reality" which must be searched for; that there is a supernatural world; that there is a religious instinct in man and there are spiritual verities which must be understood as taught by religion.

When the Agnostic asserts that we know nothing of a supernatural world, that our experience shows everything to be perfectly natural, and that deeper knowledge proves that the same naturalness prevails all over the Universe, the believer in the supernatural insists that *there is* mystery and illusion all over. He asserts that more things exist than we are aware of, and though he admits many of them may remain beyond our ken forever, they are, however, clearly apprehended by the spiritual minded. Well, we are frankly not interested in mysteries and illusions; we do not feel unhappy and uncomfortable on account of them. There are enough of realities in this world to interest us, and we can safely leave mysteries to mystics and visionaries. Our contributor is very scornful about those who assert that one must not believe anything that cannot be seen or proved. He wonders why we believe that the Earth is round, since to our senses it appears flat. Why, he asks, do we trust the assurance of competent authorities on the subject? He naively thinks that in the same manner we ought to trust certain religious teachers who claim that they know all about the supernatural world and are even in communion with that Reality,

otherwise known as a Loving and Holy God.

Our contributor is certainly not ingenious in drawing such an analogy. We know that it is a favourite argument of the Jesuit when he lectures to a class of semi-educated people. It however, hardly does credit to a learned lecturer. Now, the fact is that we can reasonably believe anything that reliable authorities teach us provided it is believable, possible and probable for, if needs be, it can be verified to one's satisfaction. Can any one verify the statement of any person, however sincere, who claims to be in communion with God? When a person tells us that he feels bilious, we can accept this as perfectly possible and probable. When he tells us that an inner light enables him to perceive the spiritual, we are permitted to suspect that something must be wrong with his temperament. Believers, like our contributor, are very scornful about, what they call, the limitation of human knowledge. They are always alluding to things which, they allege, are beyond our grasp, but which Faith alone can make us apprehend. They are fond of assuring us, with all the gravity they can command, that "we move about in worlds not realized." This, indeed, is the stock in trade of the African witch doctor when he desires to impress his community with the awe of the unknown. Our contributor, too, was very, very solemn about these alleged mysteries and dangers when he assured his Y. M. C. A. audience that only Faith can save and reassure us. Not all kind of faiths; but faith in its true form which alone is not irrational. (Every religionist believes that his own particular faith is the true one). Faith, he says, "is the out-post of reason, or the 'reach that

exceeds our grasp.' "We 'move about in worlds not realized.' "Who are you and who am I" he exclaimed, "who are here this evening talking about these high matters?" "It is an extraordinary affair, this human life self-consciousness, rational, capable of so much, and yet so insecure, surrounded with dangers, beset with problems, and so transient face with death. It is so amazing a thing this human life we have, that there must be some significance behind it all."

These words, of course, must have sounded awfully impressive in a Y. M. C. A. Hall. It must have made the flesh of the timid, simple minded folk present there creep that evening to be told that we are surrounded with dangers which only religion can make us avoid. Yes; they must have been terribly impressive those words. "These must be some significance behind it all." That's the probability said to have been made into a certainty by Christian revelations, which inspires all these beliefs. It was born of the egotism of man—the conceit in him that his life is too precious to be annihilated in the end like the rest of creation. No; he cannot for a moment admit that all will end with death. He yearns to live eternally, if not in this world, in another. The dread of death, of the unknown, has created all his terrors. It originated with our savage ancestors and is always stronger where knowledge is absent. We have wrested a good many of Nature's secrets which use to terrify our ancestors. Their comfort was the witch doctor—the ancestors of the priest and the parson—whom they believed was in familiar touch with the spirits who caused all the trouble. We, who no longer stand in terror before such phenomena like eclipses, comets, earthquakes,

thunder and lightning, are no longer in need of priests and parsons to intercede Heaven to protect from these phenomena. Is there any wonder that these priests and parsons must be forever cursing modern knowledge for the neglect they now experience, and be sadly asking:—*Où sont les neiges d'antan?* What else can they do but to warn credulous folk that dangers and mysteries still beset their path, and that they would perish, or would feel miserable if priests to and parsons do not comfort them?

It is what the religionist believes to be mysterious—the unknowable, the fear of death, and the riddle of existence which inspire his awe and creates his "religion." It was the Earl of Beaconsfield, we believe, who once said that where our knowledge ends our religion begins. A truer word was never spoken. There is no doubt many gaps in our knowledge, and it is only natural that priests and parsons should live in them. These gaps are their natural habitation, and their dread of science is that it dislodges them from these.

Our contributor, therefore, like all true religionists, wonders that any thoughtful and logical person should reject all these childish beliefs in the supernatural as illusory. He points to the existence of many creeds as a proof that religion is not illusory. When religion is based on such illusory beliefs, it matters not whether it is that of the Christian, the Jew, the Parsee, the Hindu the Mahomedan or the Bhuddhist. All of them can be traced to the same fundamental error, namely:—the attempt to explain the phenomena of cause and effect and the belief that they are caused by mysterious agencies which must be propitiated.

Our contributor talks very glibly about faith being a transcendental gift. He is, of course, speaking of the Christian faith, and that, too, of the particular brand of Christianity to which he belongs. He would, probably, consider the faith of a Hindu in Vishnu or Shiva, or that of a Mahomedan in Mahomed as a prophet of God to be purely erroneous. All his grand talk on the subject is pure mystical jargon—a wealth of word-spinning and nothing more.

To imagine that a Loving and Holy God exists, and that he takes special care of the Christians may be a comforting belief for any one who cares to believe this. (In reality the Christian, whatever he may say to the contrary, is afraid of his God. In his heart of hearts he believes him to be a sky tyrant who is ever ready to consign him to Hell or otherwise punish him for the slightest transgression.) To obviate this, he is obliged to flatter and praise him; call him holy and just; loving and forgiving; a father and a protector. To believe that a loving and good god exists, one must blink at the solid fact that this world is full of evil and cruelty, not of the creation of man. Nature acts blindly and capriciously. It is red in tooth and claw because it is the natural condition of existence. Nature cares not for the individual. If the righteous transgresses its laws, even through sheer ignorance, it will punish him exactly as it would the wicked. Nature has operated in the same manner for thousands million of years before man appeared on the scene. It is evident that Nature does not operate for the benefit of man, as the religionist foolishly believes. Religionists always shirk the question whether an Omnipotent and Omniscient God is also the

author of evil. All their quibbling to the contrary cannot satisfy reason on this point.

Our contributor has a lot to say about the advantages of religions. He would have us believe that the existence of so many religions is a sure proof that the religious instinct is inborn in man. To begin with, this is not a fact, Man learns about his religion as he would learn any other thing. It is always drummed into him from early childhood. To talk about Jecus Christ having given us a revelation about the spiritual world, God, and the rest is only begging the question. Religion is not the guardian of morality, though it professes to teach it. Man has come by his moral sense through hard experience and the laws of necessity. No God ever gave a moral code to man.

Our contributor finally, in a fire work display, assures us that religion has been a source of progress in the world; that it has set man free and has enabled him to stand against his environment! Is it possible for any well-informed person to make such an audacious claim for religion? What religion one may ask him, has been a great source of progress in the world? Is it the Christian religion? Our contributor, surely, cannot be so ignorant as not to know that the Christian religion has been a great bar to progress, to civilization, to the welfare of mankind from its very inception. Following faithfully the teaching of its Founder that this world was of no consequence, (Christ taught that the Kingdom of God was at hand and that this world was going to be ended soon) the Church despised profane knowledge, and strenuously opposed it. It plunged Europe into darkness and superstition which lasted for centuries. The civilization of Greece

and Rome disappeared under its sway. Christianity opposed bitterly all the Sciences ; to name but a few :—Chemistry, Astronomy, Geology, Biology, Geography, Medicine, Economics and Usury. It spread ignorance, intolerance, bigotry, misery far and wide. It suppressed all thoughts that contradicted its teaching ; persecuted savagely and compelled belief. It introduced the infamous Inquisition which lasted five centuries. It waged ruthlessly the most bloody wars known in history and caused confusion and discord among nations. Can our contributor deny this?

How, then, can such an institution be called a great source of progress in the world ? Were it not for Science that has enlightened and civilized us we should surely be still in the jungle of religion and under the sway of ignorant priests like the Roman Catholics are now. Our contributor was assuredly quite safe when he talked all this balderdash before a Y. M. C. A. audience. Who was there to contradict him ? It, however, requires a good deal of boldness on his part to try and argue these things with Freethinkers.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE SCOPE OF RATIONALISM.

A cursory survey of the History of Rationalism shows that it has been, from the beginning of the movement, directed against Theism, based on Revelation, or divine instinct in man. There has been no satisfactory account given in any Scriptures of the West or the East, as to the reliability of the medium through which God has revealed Himself and His religious doctrines to Mankind in any age. The writers of the religious texts said to have been revealed, exercised their imagination to the extent possible, and laid down several absurd theories and tenets, which, for several centuries, were taken as true in the respective localities, by the ignorant and illiterate people, and innumerable superstitious habits and customs thus came into vogue. Gradually, as some people advanced in education and in powers of reasoning, doubts began to be entertained as to the truth and utility of the teachings recorded in the Scriptures, and their subsequent interpolations, teeming

with contradictions and absurdities. The faith in the people, in general, grew very strong because of the observance of the rituals enjoined on them, for hundreds of generations, with the result that they were all rooted to the very fibre of their mental constitution ; and they could not tolerate any opposition. Rational thinkers found it very dangerous to interfere with the trend of beliefs and thoughts, prevailing among the people.

In England, Herbert of Cherbury (1581-1648) tried to shake the foundation of irrational faith in the people, and laid down that reason must form, in itself, the capacity for all truths, religious and moral, and no Revelation, so-called, should be accepted unless it harmonises with rational knowledge. Johann Sömmerring (1725-91) applied Spiritual teachings to the measure of virtue and happiness produced. Teller, Eberhard, and Stembart (1734-1809) reduced Christianity to popularisation of utilita-

rian morals. Wolff distinguished between 'contingent truths of fact' and 'necessary truths of reason,' and taught that real philosophical knowledge consisted in transforming all contingent elements into rational ones. Kant said that Religion is only a form of morality, but clouded the effect of the observation by the remark that the efficiency of the pure concept of understanding is confined to space and time, and to the form of presentation, and that mere Reason did not suffice for the cognition of an absolute Being (God and Soul), which involves transcendental ideas. (Critique of Reason)

The Rationalists have been struggling hard for centuries with several conflicts of ideas among the leading men, and they have not been able to make a headway. Hartpole Lecky's History of Rationalism (1865) may serve to throw much light on the thorny path of Rationalism. It may not, however, be of much use to give a summary of the past history when the object of the rationalist is to lay out a clear-cut road for the future.

The main aspects to be carefully dealt with by the rationalists on the theistic side are :—

1. The truth of Revelation by a Supreme Being—the Creator for the guidance of those who were brought into existence by Him.
2. The divine instinct said to have been implanted in man, in the form of what is known as the 'Spiritual Soul,' which is said to be part of that great Being.

It may not be out of place here to state that the scope of rationalism need not be confined to orthodox Theism, but

may well be extended to all other aspects concerning man's welfare in the world on the Social, Moral, Economic and physiological sides of life, such as—marriage, dress, fashions, formalities, food, social manners &c., which come in conflict with strict utilitarian and rational principles. I may hope to dwell on each of them, later on, separately.

As to the first aspect, referring to the existence of a Supreme Being, who has revealed himself as the Creator of the Universe, if the observations of Kant as to the insufficiency of human reason to take cognisance of an absolute Being, because of the transcendental nature of the cognition, are universally accepted, much trouble is saved, and the rationalist may have rest and peace of mind on that question. But their mental ebullition may not subside so easily. There is an outrush of thoughts in their active minds, and they ask what these transcendental ideas are like, what led to the positivity of the assertion as to the existence of a being who cannot be comprehended by the human mind, how that Being could himself have come into existence when there was none to give him life, size and shape; wherefrom he derived such vast powers of creating such an immense universe, and a host of other questions which the theists would find it very inconvenient to answer, otherwise than by resorting to the theory of transcendentalism. Observing the hesitant attitude of the theist, the rationalist boldly gives out that there is no such supreme being who could have created by an incomprehensible process, this physical world on which we live, move, and have our being. But the matter does not end there. The Universe stares us in the face, and forces

itself on our physical vision. Where it came from if none has created it, and how there could be a result without a cause, are the next pertinent questions the theist vehemently puts. The rationalists say that it is there, that it has always been there, and that it had no beginning. The answer rouses the rational feelings of the theist, and at once comes the question whether it could be reasonably supposed that any thing came into existence of itself without a cause or a Creator, and that by rationalists with practical experience of the class of people who mainly rely upon the knowledge they derive from the world. Their only possible answer is that, as it is not possible to account for the origin of the world by any rational means, and as it has been in existence from time immemorial, the only supposition must be that it had no beginning. The Theists likewise answer that, as anything that is in existence must have been created, and that, as nothing could be known as to who brought it into existence, we reasonably presume an unknown creator, and call him God. It is now quite clear that the positive assertion as to the existence of a Supreme Being is as much a matter of convention to the Theists, as the perpetual existence of the Universe without a beginning is to the Rationalists. Revelation and divine instincts follow directly from the God of the theists, and if God himself is a conventional being, these may also be taken as conventions, if the rationalists choose to do so.

Now, the question arises as to who is in a better position the theist or the rationalist even from a rational point of view. So long as neither of them can deal with hard facts as to the origin of

the universe, and both rely only upon a convention, they must keep their reasoning faculties aside on this particular question, and assume a reconciliatory attitude, even on the existence of God as the Creator and Guide of the World.

It does not seem possible to eradicate the notions with regard to the Creation and the Creator, as the convictions are deep rooted, having been hereditarily transmitted, from generation to generation, for thousands of years. It serves no useful purpose for the rationalists to concentrate their attention on this vexed question, as their primary object, as is generally understood, is the amelioration of the condition of mankind in matters affecting their well-being in all aspect of worldly life. The opinion of the majority, as to the origin of the universe, and of the existence of a Creator, may be taken by the rationalists as the result of sentiment, so long as it is rendered harmless in its effect on the sphere of social activities in worldly life. They would be serving a great purpose if, by their constant efforts, they can secure the greatest good of the largest community, as their chief object is only humanitarian. Even according to the Theists, virtue or sin which has the supposed result of securing Heaven or Hell, relates only to the deeds in the world, and whatever may be the beliefs with regard to the ultimate rewards or punishments so long as they depend upon what men do in this world, if the character and conduct are rectified and reformed, the world will reach the zenith of perfection even in the distant future, and that is all that rationalists need care for, in their anxiety to improve Humanity. It is a fact admitted by all intelligent and unprejudiced theists that all religious tenets and doctrines are

meant only for the moral elevation of the people, and the alleged divine origin of their teachings, even it is not believed in, may well be taken as tending to assign a sanctified authority to the manifestation of the moral principles in the conduct of the people. There are some religious texts so interpreted. The higher Hindu philosophy does not speak of a personal God, and admits Evolution.

In the Bhagvat Gita the three fundamental ideas of the perfect ideal of Godhood are:—1 The Truth, 2 Goodness, (Holiness) 3. Beauty, (Light). The assertion that God dwells in every Soul is said to be the most vital one, and if Godhood consists in the three fundamental ideas stated above, all that is required of man to attain perfection is the development of Truth, Goodness and Intellectual Light. For the rationalist's satisfaction the soul may well be interpreted as the mind—the all-important factor exerting its influence on human conduct proportionately to the extent of its development and the Rationalist may not give it the activities attributed to the soul, independent of the mind. Mere thoughts or notions do not affect the practical side of the world, so long as they are harmless in their ultimate effect on the career of man. Many of the other lessons in Bhagvat Gita do not come in conflict with the principles of a rationalist. Some of them may profitably be referred to here.

“God is Love”, “Where Love is there God is.” These are the highest indications of humanitarian principles. “Dharma should be practised as a positive virtue.” By Dharma is meant only the right conduct, and the rationalist has no objection to it. “Wealth and enjoyment (Happiness) are the rewards meted out

in this world to those that practise Dharma.” This is quite consistent with what the rationalist should promise to the man of right conduct. “Moksha” is the reward in the other world.” The rationalist may not trouble himself with what the word ‘Moksha’ signifies, and ignore the statement as he does not know anything about it “The root cause of all worldly and Spiritual enjoyment is Dharma. “Only the human values of worldly essences may be taken and the spiritual ones ignored, reserving them without rejecting, so that if by his conduct of the right type he happens to realise they also, he may feel highly thankful for the unexpected reward. “Goodness makes God our nearest Friend.” As the rationalist does not want to make God a personal entity, he may well take the word as the power in Nature that tends to make the good man happy. The word of three letters (God) matters not, as it is meant only to convey ideas. In the higher philosophical books of Hindu religion, God is represented as formless, feelingless, and unaffected by human deeds. Madame Blavatsky does not object to the Buddhist theory that the universal Spirit (God) is not a thing, not a concrete or a visible being to which any name expressive of an object of physical perception can be given. She says in ‘Isis Unveiled’ Vol. I, that it matters not if God is not regarded as a personal conscious being, though her own belief, of course, is that He is. The rationalist can have no objection to a reference to a universal power, enjoying, as he does, the, vital essence of Sun’s rays, and benefited as he is by Electricity and Magnetism, which are powers sufficiently magnificent for his appreciation. Claiming to be a strict rationalist myself, I cannot possibly brush aside—and I think it irrational

to do so the several personal experience which unmistakably show that there are some powerful influences at work, which the simple reasoning faculty of man cannot account for. I hope, later on, to present them to the readers of this journal, circumstances permitting.

On a very careful process of thinking, it appears clear that no one, of a practical turn of mind, need bother himself as to whether there is a *God in person*, supervising the living beings on the Earth below, or there is a power in Nature, within or without the body of the living creatures, that automatically exerts influence, for good or evil on the beings occupying the Globe. The moral and social aspects, in the widest sense, may well be developed on the highest benevolent and utilitarian principles, and the rationalist may have still the satisfaction of doing his duty, without unnecessarily interfering with the inner ineradicable beliefs, notions and habits, causing mental conflict and uneasiness, so long as those inner beliefs and ideas do not have the result of affecting human conduct with reference to worldly happiness and contentment, consistently with the rational principles generally accepted as tending to improve the condition of man.

Any rationalist may fairly ask whether it is possible or practicable to do anything in the direction suggested, so long as men do not proceed on rational lines. This is the crux of the question. The answer depends on the nature of the beliefs, ideas and habits. Beliefs generate ideas, and ideas, when put into practice create habits. Beliefs being mostly instinctive, without any rational basis, even well-educated people find themselves in-

capable of eradicating them, as they feel they are part and parcel of their own nature. In several instances they are not by themselves harmful, except for the fact that they are not-compatible with reasoning faculties possessed by man. Thoughtful men often scrutinise the ideas in the light of rational criticism, find them shaky, and yet most of them cling to the ideas for want of power of mental resistance. There are others who change their ideas theoretically, and yet cannot alter their habits, which have become their second nature. But when the harmful nature of the consequences of the habits are repeatedly pressed on them they gradually realise the bad consequences, and make a genuine attempt to correct them to the extent possible. Persistent efforts do have some beneficial results. Men, educated and uneducated are of different kinds. Some have not even the habit of thinking, and do not find the need to leave the beaten track. There are others who can think and do find the need for a change, and are yet unable to take the initiative. Most of the intelligent section of the educated people are of this type. Very few of even the educated have the courage of conviction. Sense of public opinion is very keen, and with it they move. To try to change public opinion is a Herculean task, which is possible only by a persistent work of propaganda. It is the general conversion of public opinion that can bring about any reform. Atheists at heart are staunch theists in public, for fear of public censure. A man of power and influence, whose nods and smiles move the people easily, can bring about a change, so long as Self and its satisfaction are the prevailing motives with hopes of realisation. However,

attempts should be made in all directions. The easier process seems to be to begin at home with the moderately educated female section of the population. Whatever may be the usual habits they follow without thought, they have no fixed beliefs and ideas, among the modern section of them. The orthodox Brahman families, with regular rituals and ceremonies, may, in many cases, be unapproachable, but the educated unorthodox ladies do appreciate reason and can get over sentiment very easily. The kind of Rationalist Journals like "The Reason" do not reach them. The usefulness of such journals is only limited to those that have a rational trend of thought, and others try only to make the journal the target of ridicule and laughter. The

patrons of the rationalist movement must be prepared to create interest among the neutrals by a liberal distribution of the copies of the journal, and the more important thing to be done is to create local interest by publishing the journals in important Mofussil centres in *Vernaculars*, so that the articles may directly appeal to the imagination of the readers. It is all a labour of love, depending, to a large extent, on the weight of the moving purse. Philanthropy must persist in the long run.

May these observations attract the attention of the sympathetic section of the wealthier Classes is the earnest prayer and hope of

A WELL-WISHER OF HUMANITY.

[Many thorough going Rationalists may not altogether agree with the suggestions of our contributor. They may not, for instance, agree that the existence of the Universe might have been due to the operator of a First Cause which escapes our understanding through its transcendentalism. No Rationalist trained in clear and logical reasoning will argue with a Theist in the manner described by our contributor. He will certainly not stop so easily at a supposed First Cause who being itself an existence must have had a Creator. If the First Cause had no Creator why not the Universe the origin of which no man knows? If the First Cause had no beginning why not the Universe also? Once admit the existence of a First Cause, whether it is considered as a being or an incomprehensible power or energy, all kind of superstitions can be built on this and the too generous Rationalist, who would concede such a point for the sake of its pragmatic value, will soon be disillusioned. The whole of the Theistic argument indeed is based on the belief of a First Cause, call it by whatever name one likes.

ED. REASON.]

IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE OF SURVIVAL AND OF AN UNSEEN WORLD ?

The question before us is this: Is there a hereafter? Is there an unseen world? Any evidence of that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns? (Hamlet). It is this which "puzzles the will"—as Shakespeare puts it.

The first point to note about this question of a hereafter—of an unseen world—is the universality of belief. From the dawn of history, indeed ever since man became a conscious being on this planet, this belief may be said to exist. It exists in all lands, in all ages. The most primitive of mankind believes it as also the most highly cultured of the human race, and all men seem to subscribe to this universal belief in an unseen world. Those who flatly deny its existence seem even at the present day to be in a microscopical minority. For example, we find the great Naturalist who tumbled upon the supreme revelation associated with the name of Charles Darwin, no other than Arthur Russel Wallace, (the fact of Evolution chanced upon both of these men simultaneously), gives expression to this belief in his "Pure Darwinism", as follows:—

"We find that Darwinism theory even when carried out to the extreme logical conclusion not only does not oppose, but lends a decided support to a belief in the spiritual nature of man. It shows us how man's body may have been developed from that of a lower animal form under the law of natural selection, but it also teaches us that we possess intellectual and moral faculties which could not have been so developed, but must have had another

origin: and for this origin we can only find an adequate cause in the unseen Universe of Spirit."

A view such as this coming from Wallace is entitled to every respect and the view cannot be disposed of by a mere gesture. Rationalists must examine the evidence of survival if any such evidence exists. A mere statement of a belief in an "Unseen Universe of Spirit" is, however, not enough; it carries no conviction whatsoever. "Let us have the evidence if it exists." That is the case of the Rationalist, and it is the only sensible rational and scientific attitude to take. At the same time, it is equally absurd and unscientific to refuse a discussion of the "evidence" so called, if any is adduced in support of this belief. Charles Darwin disagreed entirely with his life-long friend Wallace and could not see any evidence of survival and of a Creator or of a Supreme Being at work. He could not agree that the universe was in any way "the effect or expression of a Mind."

In the "Life of Darwin" by his sons we are told of some words spoken by him on this subject in the last year of his life to his friend, the then Duke of Argyll. The latter had said with reference to some of Darwin's remarkable scientific work on the Fertilization of Orchids, and cognate observations of Nature, that it was "impossible to look at these without seeing that they were the effect or expression of mind". Darwin looked at the Duke very hard, and said: "Well that often comes over me with overwhelming force, but at other times (and he shook his massive head vaguely) it seems to go away."

Herbert Spencer in his "Reflections" at the age of 73 with which he concluded his autobiography expressed his *unbelief* in a hereafter and in an "unseen Universe of the Spirit" and kindred questions. But at the same time he gave expression to these remarkable words:—

"Among men of science there are those who curiously examining the Spectre of Nebulae, calculating the masses and motions of double stars never pause to contemplate under other than physical aspects the immeasurable vast facts they record. But in both cultured and uncultured there occur lucid intervals.....By those who know much more than by those who know little, is there felt the need of explanation."

That is the core of the matter, the whole Riddle of the Universe, the stupendously vast phenomenon that passes before us. The inconceivable magnitude of the Galactic System, for example, demands an "explanation," as to its origin. The Sidereal Universe looks like one vast living cinematograph film. The "Riddle" will probably never be satisfactorily solved or explained, *because science is not in any way concerned with ultimate origins*. That is the province of Philosophy. The question of the existence of an "Unseen World" is not primarily the province of the Physicist or of the Mathematician, but that of the Philosopher.

It is wholly impossible, indeed unreasonable, to expect a cultured Rationalist to discuss calmly and philosophically the gigantic absurdities of our theologians—even learned theologians of even the present 20th century. For example, I have before me as I write Dr. Peterson

Smyth's (charming in many respects) "Life of Christ". In his opening chapter, I find this perfectly astounding statement (Dr. Smyth is a F.R.S., D.D., D. Litt, D.C.L. and D.Sc., etc.,) Note the gigantic absurdity. He says:—

"We believe that far beyond the stars and the planets is the Unseen World, the World of God and His Holy Angels."

Now, what can this possibly mean? "Beyond the stars and planets"? For consider what this means. Let us reduce it to prosaic language and analyse this absurd statement. Let us consider, and if possible, grasp the distance of the nearest stars and the furthest from this planet upon which we live,

The hopeless absurdity of Dr. Smyth's foolish remote world can be at once comprehended. My readers probably know that a "Light year" is the distance a ray of light travels in one year. Light travels at the rate of 1,86,000 miles a second, so multiply 1,86,000 by the number of seconds in one year. This gives you the number of miles a ray of light covers in 365 days.

I would ask my readers to imagine for a moment that they were listening to a concert, say, in the Albert Hall, London, and that they were sitting, say, on the front seats before the stage. On the stage there would be a wireless apparatus. Now light travels with the same speed as wireless signals because both are waves of electric disturbance. Incidentally, this speed is just about a million times that of sound. The enormous disparity in the sounds and of electric waves is vividly brought out in the ordinary process of broadcasting. When a speaker broadcasts from London, his voice takes actu-

ally longer to travel 3 feet from his mouth to the microphone, as a *sound wave*, than it does to travel a further 560 miles, to say, Berlin or Milan, as an electric wave. Wireless listeners in Australia hear the music of this Albert Hall Concert sooner than an ordinary listener sitting on the front benches in the Concert Hall, who obviously realizes *sound alone*. It is heard in India or Australia in about a 1/15 of a second after it is played. Yet light or wireless waves travelling with the same speed as light takes exactly 4.27 years to reach the nearest star, so that the inhabitants of say Proxima Centauri would be over four-and-a quarter years late in a hearing a terrestrial concert at the Albert Hall! Now, take the case of the inhabitants of stars so distant that the Albert Hall music *would not yet have reached* had it started on its long journey before the Norman Conquest of England, before the Pyramids were built, even before man appeared on Earth 3,00,000 years ago. I have before me, as I write, a photograph plate (by the Mount Wilson Observatory) which shows some of the stars in the furthest depth of space—the most remote objects accessible at present to observation—a cluster of 162 nebulae in Pegasus mostly at distances of 100 million light years or more. Each cluster contains enough material to make a "Star City" of thousands of millions of stars! A new 200 inch telescope about to be completed will reveal stars it is calculated about 250 million light years away. There are other systems of stars over 900, 1000 to a million light years distant from the Earth. (This long digression in astronomical marvels is necessary to give an idea of space and the insignificance of our Earth in it just to show the absurdity of Dr. Smyth's belief

in the abode of Spirits beyond the stars!)

Just imagine that according to Dr. Smyth the Unseen World, the World of God and his Angels is still "*beyond all this*". The astronomical magnitude of this absurdity which I have clearly demonstrated cannot, however, be realized by any person who has no idea of what Astronomy teaches. Astronomy is the best science to dispel those stupid beliefs about heaven being the abode of God, the unseen world. This explains why all that has been written for 2,000 years—the question of the unseen world, may be said to be so much nonsense. If people who wrote all these absurdities knew a little of Astronomy, they would have realized what rot they were talking about. Ignorance of that science made people wonder at the work of a supposed Creator. Cicero, for instance, declared 2,000 years ago: "What can be so plain and evident when we behold the heavens and contemplate the celestial bodies as the existence of some Supreme divine intelligence by which we are ignored?" Of scientific evidence of the assumed unseen world there is not an iota; it is all a matter of personal belief. Scientists will only be justified in considering the question seriously when instances are forthcoming that there is something in the claim that a hereafter exists which cannot be ignored. For the present no such evidence is in sight.

I am for an open mind on the question and believe that science must not turn a deaf ear to the claims of responsible and eminent people who assert that there is enough of evidence to merit complete investigation of the subject.

J. D. JENKINS.

[We publish this article, not because we are convinced that there is anything in the claim that an unseen World of Spirits exists, and that it deserves the serious attention of scientists, but to point out how absurd that claim is. Our contributor, himself, ridicules this when he shows the immensity of the Universe and the insignificance of our Planet in it. Is that Unseen World beyond the stars as people unacquainted with Astronomy are inclined to believe? A knowledge of Astronomy is the best thing to dispel this superstition.

Wallace shared the popular belief about spirits when he imagined that the mind of man could not be a natural development with the evolution of his brain. A deep knowledge of the evolution of mind right from the lower animals to primitive man, and from the latter to the modern Nordic men, would have probably convinced him that there was no necessity to postulate a mysterious origin for the mind of man. The universality of a belief does not necessarily prove it to be true.

It is all very well to talk of "spirit," "disembodied spirit," "soul" and all that. What is soul or spirit? How can such a thing which is believed to be unorganized exist? The human mind cannot conceive of such an existence though we glibly speak as if it does. Some people say that our soul is a parcel of the Infinite Mind to which it returns at death; other believe that consciousness may survive the bodily death; religionsists believe that it is an entity that escapes at death and leads a separate existence in an Unseen World. A little clear thinking will show how difficult it is to satisfy oneself as to what the soul is. The belief in the existence of the soul is clearly a religious one without proof or evidence. (Ed. REASON.]

THE INDIAN ROPE TRICK.

Amid the economic distraction, class-war and limitless military competition of our time, it should not have been possible to snatch a moment of idle curiosity. The achievements of Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin fill the news horizon, and each succeeding day leaves the world more breathless and humble than its predecessor. We realise that war is not the only boiling-point that should agitate life on the planet. There are indeed a hundred other ways in which the rise in temperature may manifest itself, when freedom of individual life and expression is affected. The release of fumes designed to scorch all opposition, like the hot equatorial wind that burns up the bird

and plant life in its march, is an avowed political instrument employed towards attaining unity and larger peace. It is the unity got at by the physical removal of the opponent, and the peace beside his grave.

The confusion in modern political and economic science is none restricted to those branches of practical knowledge. Scientific theory in departments where the peculiar interests of temporal life are least expected to enter, in Mathematics, and Physics for instance, seems at this time of the day to suffer from the same kind of misty confusion that clouds the darkened sky. Elsewhere, in spite of the

extended service that science is rendering in its application to the wireless, the aeroplane, and the hundred-and-one inventions recently being perfected, certain sections of its exponents would yet appear to uphold the faith in an 'historic' idealism. The hope to reinstate the Mind keeps their science alive, and religion that has everything to gain by the vacillations of materialist science helps to render their thoughts the more popular. This kind of mutual service between the godly and the human is noway a strange experience. The hoary Bhagavad Gita sings :

Deva bhavayatanena te deva bhavayantu vah.

Parasparam bhavayantah sreyah paramavapsyadha. (III, 11)

(You nourish the gods, and may the gods nourish you. Thus nourishing one another you will reap the greatest benefit.)

To the clergyman it is solace that at least there is the Mathematician ruling the universe, and that scientific laws break once at least in relation to electronic behaviour. Any breach in the material order of natural phenomena finds room for the divine Throne, and even a cold Calculator, devoid of the human virtues of mercy, justice, and compassion will do to disarm disbelief in a designing personality. Prof. Eddington and Sir James Jeans are more orthodox than they are aware of.

The distance between religion and magic is not long. The London Magic Circle is only at a stone's throw. Throw naturalism overboard, and you board the steamer of the miracle-mind. Successful deception induces belief, and there are

no fences against any form of belief. We may keep in deposit vast amounts in order to investigate into the truth and validity of the claim, but when there is the will to believe, the fact that a bank intervenes is no guarantee that the performer does not get all the money. As Earnest Wood pointed out, the idea of the Rope-Trick is a very old one, known from before the time of the great Shankara Acharya, who adverted to the process of creating a mass-illusion. The classic illustration of mistaking the rope for a serpent (Rajju Sarpa Bhranti) is utilised to impress the importance of knowledge or Gnana, to dispel Avidya, (ignorance) which induced the illusion (Vivarta) of difference, or separateness from the Brahman. The rope is the basis, the similarity in appearance between the rope and the snake in insufficient light is the means whereby the illusion is induced, and a deeper and more intimate knowledge, the Tatva-Gnana (a real understanding of the essence) yields the explanation. Penetrating vision alone helps to reveal the rope behind the reptile-obsession.

Nor may this obsession be confined to individual experience. Entire communities may thus be brought under control. In India, the rope has its sanctity typified, perhaps, by the sacred thread. Schemes of suggestion abound in the history of the race. Religious devotion is often enhanced by stories of miracles performed by the founders. The common mind is slow to perceive the indignity and affront to humanity involved in making the reverence due to the redeemers dependant upon their capacity to achieve magical results. And yet, the tendency to associate the magician and the miracle-worker with the names of

thinkers, sociologists and philosophers of all ages and climes, is the perpetual reminder to us that religious efficacy has its roots deep down in human ignorance, in our insufficiency to stand a particular situation.

I had, very recently, been amid a throng that witnessed a curious performance which was claimed to have been the result of Yogic levitation. In a protected enclosed space the body of a boy induced into hypnotic trance-sleep was exposed lying on a plank of the length and width just enough to hold him; the body was at a height of about a yard from the ground. The dark curtain behind, and the dim lights were, of course, there. The audience were shown the test by passing hoops that seemed to traverse the space all round the body hanging in mid air. The performer and his assistant handled two large circular hoops which were employed to pass around the boy that lay unconscious on the plank. But one had one's own misgivings. Was it necessary to call in Yogic powers to give such a simple performance, in an enclosed, protected cabin, under dim lights, and in front of the dark curtain? If the hoops were of a size, whose diameter was a little over one half of the length of the plank on which the boy lay, the wires that supported the weight at its centre will easily escape detection, while the passes of the hoops will cover entire space around. They may not transgress the centre on the topside of the levitated body. But the illusion is made up by the circle that began to move from the direction of the head towards that of the feet which the hoop was easily made to pass as its size was decidedly larger than half the length of the boy. And on the second

day of the same performance there was little room for doubt. While the assistant was making the usual passes of the hoop round the body to show us that it was totally unsupported by physical lengths, the sleeping boy and the plank on which he rested were seem swinging along, in the direction of his head and feet. It was clear that two wires were lending support at very short distances from the centre of the plank on either side, and the rest was merely delicate, skilful balancing. For, if the wires were to support the body at either extreme, say near the head, and the feet, the hoops can hardly pass over the space on the topside of the plank. Hence, the need for bringing together the two wires as nearly as possible towards the centre, consistent with the placing of the body and the plank in a well-balance position. When the hoop touched one of these wires, the sleeping boy swung helplessly to and fro. This is an instance where the rope (or the wire) caused an illusion of supernatural psychic powers in a performer who was able to conceal its presence. In the theatre of life there be many such wire-works, pulling and pushing our faiths, this way and that, even as the trance-boy swung.

Yes, the coiled rope ascends. It stands even as a rod on end. The magic-boy goes up to the top. The elder magician sends the sword. Blood is seen on it. So many sights too uncouth to mention are seen. Where do these lead? Indian Yogis will point to the sky. But is it anything remote from the dark internal centre of the earth? The rope whose ascent we saw, the boy that climbed, the sword that went up, and the blood that oozed, they all come down, dropping to the earth. Its gravity is the hugest

miracle. What man performs is trickery, a deftness of the limb aided by the subtlety of the brain, designed to deceive the less clever. Nature gave us the longest rope, but shall man hang his sense therewith? Why, today, magic,

religion, philosophy, and even science in part hang on the Yoga of the Indian Rope Trick. Will the sacred thread of the East be caught up in the idealist illusion reborn at present in the West?

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

CHRISTIANITY AND WOMAN.

I dealt last week, in a general way, with Mrs. Northcroft's (Editor of the *Coming Ministry*) comments on my paragraph concerning the question of the position of women as taught by Christianity. I had said, in a paragraph in a previous issue, that the Methodist Conference in rejecting the proposal that women should enter the Methodist ministry, was acting in accordance with Christian tradition, and that it was part of a Christian teaching that all the evils in the world began with a woman. Mrs. Northcroft retorted that the statement might be true of the old Semitic view, that it was not true of the modern aspect of Christianity, and that there were certain broad principles laid down by Jesus Christ that made for the equality of the sexes. I do not know what these broad principles are, and therefore cannot deal with them; but the question of the influence of the Christian Church on the position of woman is a matter of historic proof or disproof, and it is on the question of fact, rather than that of theory that I am now concerned.

In its secular aspect Christianity appears in history as an heir of the Roman and—in a degree further removed—Greek civilizations. It was not an indigenous product that had to outgrow certain stages of primitive thinking. It inherited the products of an advanced

civilization which had already sloughed off many primitive beliefs and practices. Roman law and Greek culture were solid facts, and their beneficial influence have endured to our own day. But the advances made under Roman rule dwindled away under Christian influence, and woman became a mere chattel of the man, without social rights once she was married, and with very few rights before marriage. The laws concerning slavery became harsher in character and emancipation became more difficult. Freedom of thought and speech died out; civilization as a whole deteriorated, and no one but a monk would have found Christian Europe in the tenth century preferable to the pagan world of the third. And it is idle to put this deterioration down to the invasion of the barbarians. Pagan Rome had encountered barbarians in many parts of the world. But Pagan Rome civilized them, Christian Rome confirmed them in their barbarism and deepened their superstition.

Woman in the Bible.

The causes of the transformation were various; I am now concerned with one factor only, but this is the most powerful and the most permeative, and I intend dealing with one aspect, that in relation to the position of women. The Christians were very peculiar "The people of a

said, "Above all, it seems desirable that we turn away from the sight of women." Principal Donaldson rightly describes the influence that early Christianity exerted on the position of women by saying that if we define man as a male human being and woman as a female human being, Christianity took "male" out of the definition of the man, and "human" out of the definition of woman, and so left man as a human being and woman as a female being. Professor Becker in his *Christianity and Islam*, also says that the low view of women in Mohammedan countries is due to the fact that it reached Islam in Christian dress, and with the authority of Christian hostility to marriage. I do not know what were the "broad principals" governing the relations of the sexes to which Mrs. Northcroft refers, but it is evident that if they were on the side of liberality they were either ignored by the early Christians, or they had never heard of them.

Woman Under Church Rule.

The teaching laid down in both the Old and the New Testaments, and the practices of the early Church led to more restrictive rules and regulations as the power of Christianity increased. Not only was a married woman prevented holding property, but the right of equal inheritance between brothers and sisters also went, the Church holding that the male was the "worthiest of blood." This was a distinction which that staunch old Conservative and rationalizer of feudal privileges, Blackstone, admitted was quite unknown to Roman law. Blackstone also laid it down that, according to law, "The very being or legal existence of a woman is suspended during marriage." The whole influence of Canon

Law was against the equality of the sexes, and its aim appeared to be the complete destruction of every vestige of the freedom and dignity which the Roman law gave to women.

That Modern Aspect.

So long as the power of the Christian Churches remained unimpaired woman was doomed to a position of legal and religious subordination. All the leaders of the established churches were agreed upon this. Luther held that woman's functions were to bear children and attend on man. Calvin followed the same line, Knox thundered against the Monstrous Regiment of Women, and decided that "By the order of nature, by the malediction and curse pronounced against woman, by the mouth of St. Paul, the interpreter of God's sentence, woman was shut out of all authority". In America the Puritans carried the same conception into the new world, and in the struggle for the equality of the sexes in America, as in this country, the chief opposition came from Christians. The Methodist view in America as late as 1880 was officially expressed in the following deliverance:—

Woman is under a curse which subjects her to man.....The Bible is addressed to man and not to woman; man comes to God through Jesus, and woman comes to Jesus through man; every privilege the wife enjoys she receives through her husband, for God has declared that woman shall not rule man, but be subject to him.

I said last week that the outcome of the resolution before the Methodist Conference was similar to other resolutions that had been before that gathering

during the past forty years. Although writing away from home, I found my dates to be very exact, for it was in 1804 that a resolution to admit women as delegates to the Conference was brought forward. That resolution was rejected. A year later, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes proposed that women delegates, provided "a district Synod judges that her election will serve the interests of the work of God," be admitted to the Conference. This also was rejected. And now, in 1934, the Conference has rejected the proposal for women to enter the ministry. When they are admitted their admission will doubtless be proclaimed as a triumph of Christian principles.

Other Churches have been equally as Christian in their behaviour. In 1916 there was a National Mission of Health and Repentance established "under the auspices of the Established Church." The women wished to lend a hand. There was no objection to that. But they also wanted to preach, and that was a quite different matter. A compromise was arranged that they should preach to women and girls only but they were not to preach from the pulpit, the lectern, or the chapel steps. These places were taboo to women just as a man might touch the body of the risen Jesus but a woman might not. But even to that compromise there were strenuous objections, for a page of the *Times* was covered with the signatures of staunch male and female Christians who objected to women preachers as being unchristian. A further public protest was issued by the clergy of the diocese of London stating:—

We believe that to grant permission to women to preach in our churches is

contrary to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and contrary to the mind and general practice of the whole Catholic Church. Still more, we believe that such permission will be an encouragement to those women who publicly claim their right to be appointed to the priesthood and episcopacy of the Church, which claim is heretical.

That last sentence is worth nothing:—"Which claim is heretical." Of course it is. The claim of Mrs. Northcroft, editor of a Christian paper, and fully believing herself to be a Christian, is yet heretical; more than heretical, it is distinctly anti-Christian. For when all is said and done in the way of excusing and apologizing, the damning facts that remain are *that it was under Christian rule that the freedom which the Roman law gave to women was completely destroyed, and it was not until the Christian Churches were weakened, until non-Christian belief became a common feature in society that the demand to equality was conceded by many, although still bitterly opposed by the male Christian of the Churches.* What, then, are we to make of the "broad principles" laid down by Jesus? What are they? Where were they expressed? When in Christian times were they put into operation? The satire of the whole situation is that the most powerful of the Christian Churches are still bitterly hostile to the principle of the equality of the sexes. Mrs. Northcroft has to look for her strongest supporters among Free-thinkers, and she finds her greatest enemies in the ranks of those who follow the teaching of Christianity.

CHAPMAN COHEN
in "The Freethinker"

THE CURSE OF TIMIDITY.

(Continued from p. 19 of July, 1934.)

If the child has received, on account of wrong education, the imprint of moral debility which has made him timid, he (or she) will suffer lifelong from this disease and will also bring up timid children, simply by contagion. What kind of men, real men, will that give us in future, which we wish sincerely to be better?

The automatons will live, like their fathers, on illusions, dreams, fears, and will of course continue carefully the tradition which maintains that people are incapable of conducting their lives, that they have not enough common sense, intelligence and patience to lead to happiness and peace on the earth.

This tradition, so slyly maintained among the masses, gives us the sickening spectacle of "authorities" of all kinds. In religion, in proud opposition to free examination and criticism of theologies and dogmas, we have "the argument of authority." In politics, again, we have "constituted authorities." I am not forgetting "scientific authorities" either. Then there is the 'authority' of parents. And what an authority! If the father is a drunkard, or even a poor devil of a timid working man who, in revenge for continuous submission to his superiors, is grossly tyrannical towards his wife and children!

All these "authorities" lead naturally to the execrable authoritarianism which we run against every day, to which we have to submit in order to live, and which destroys, little by little, if we are not on our guard, the integrity and value of our personality.

The personality of the individual violated even to its innermost recesses (the suppressions that Freud speaks of) this is permitted by timidity. After persona-

lities, collectivities, whole races are violated, oppressed, led like sheep in a fair to the great slaughter-house! And, discouraged, not daring to revolt, miserable humanity does not dare to move and leaves despots in peace.

The evil of which I have just enumerated the multiple aspects, is not, however, without remedy. The cure of timidity is above all a proof of psychology, observation, patience and quiet tenacity.

In the sphere of psychology and observation, let us go back to the origin of timidity. The child is timid because, knowing nothing of life, it is in a perpetual state of alertness and observation before anything it sees or hears. It does not reason, it submits. Its personal life is made up of impressions, more or less sharp, more or less clear or confused. In short, the child feels or expects, much more than it judges, compares or reasons. It is above all impressionable and it is this impressionability which will be the starting point of all his present or future mental states.

Fortunately, all children do not retain this ultra-sensitiveness to an adult age. Those who do have very often before their eyes the bad example of parents continually fighting and threatening each other. The child, frequently terrorised by these violent scenes, remains extremely impressionable and is readily affected by authoritative words. Later on, when he becomes an adult and has to face the inexorable realities of life, this beginner will lack decision, sagacity, insight. If he is not gifted with intelligence and a healthy ambition, he will become one of the resigned millions who are human beings only in name. He will

vegetate, physically and morally. This is the lot of the multitude, on whom the suggestion of the press, the theatre, and religious and other displays will act with disconcerting ease.

If on the other hand, an adult is intelligent and timid, moral suffering will be his share every moment of his life, and this will either make him a silent cynic or a rebel, a sour critic who always fancies himself misunderstood, one of those semilunatics, calm in appearance, whom one meets every day in cities.

What is the cure for this disease of timidity? Let us take a timid man at the age of 30, when, normally, his personality should have reached its full expansion. What does he lack above all? He lacks mental serenity, and nothing else. When serenity inhabits his soul, all his apprehensions, anxieties, uncertainties will disappear, and as a consequence, his unhealthy pride and confused interior revolt will disappear too. Controlling himself better, his judgment will be more lucid.

But how is he to get this serenity? Some prescribe extremely complicated physical and mental processes, which are apt to dishearten even people who are very anxious to make an attempt to cure themselves. In my opinion, the remedy is simple, so simple as to appear commonplace. All religions possess it without knowing it, but what they do is incomplete, because it is drowned in useless, mysterious rubbish.

Religions prescribe prayer, by which the believer momentarily gets rid of his moral anguish, his soul finds a support on which to lean, but it is only momentary. It is a crutch, but a man ought to be able to stand on his legs. His salva-

tion is within himself, not without. The believer thinks he is appealing to superior forces from whom he asks help and protection, and divine peace descends into him. But it is not divine calm, but he himself who calms his erring imagination with confidence.

If we consider that it is the imagination of the timid man that has become hypersensitive and inordinately swollen, we see at once that it is this faculty that has to be treated in order to procure mental serenity. Two means only have to be used for this purpose. The intelligence and the suggestibility of the person have to be used to effect the cure.

Appealing to his intelligence, let us show him by some examples that most of the catastrophes feared by him do not occur—that people are not at all so much concerned about him as he thinks, that the pride due to his timidity is very ill-founded, that he is able to do many more things than he thinks, that he will get rid of his awkwardness and be considered much more agreeable—if he is only more natural and attaches a little less importance to people's opinions about himself.

As for suggestibility, it is the powerful force of imagination alone which has to do its share. Generally uncontrolled, it plays its part very badly. Let the timid person control his imagination, and make it go in a favourable direction. In the past, it has intervened intensely in his fits of anger, in hatred, pride, vanity and grotesque personal satisfaction. The same imagination, properly directed, can work wonders in giving serenity, confidence, audacity, by a marvellous psychic transformation.

I tell all timid people to imagine every day, without any idea of effort or fight,

but with a simple and quiet conviction : "I have confidence in myself, I have more and more moral tranquility. I feel very well. I can do this or that without fatigue." Here we are of course in the sphere of auto-suggestion, of which some people deny the value without ever having tried it in the least. It is true that in this method, one must not imagine the impossible, but all that is possible. What is evidently possible is to substitute a benevolent thought for every evil thought, or a sense of serenity and confidence for any sense of apprehension or anxiety. Evidently it is impossible to acquire a fortune or fame and attract public attention without an effort. What auto-suggestion can produce are miracles like the much-advertised ones of places of pilgrimage like Lourdes. No religious miracle has ever restored legs to a cripple, nor made a bald man's hair grow. But paralytics have recovered and internal lesions healed. Miracle? No. Auto-suggestion provoked by an elaborate stage-effect, which is perfectly useless.

Thus I hope that every one can understand—that, the mind having its own mechanism like the body, it is easy to direct this mechanism judiciously with a view to procure a mental state which will enable the individual to use his ability for the complete development of his personality.

The human mind is partly conscious and partly unconscious. It is both when it compares and makes a choice or a decision. It is unconscious when one hears a piece of music without attention and registers it mechanically, so that one may hum it involuntarily later on ; also when forgotten memories come up again and force themselves on your attention. To make a habit of every-

thing that can procure us mental or physical happiness, is evidently possible for the Unconscious, since it often does the contrary, and we carelessly allow this

Lt.-Col. Maillard says (in substance) in his book on auto-suggestion: "The Unconscious is the vital principle of our body, which, from the first to the last breath, forms an integral part of the individual and ensures its formation, development and conservation within limits imposed by nature. It is the Unconscious which presides over all the automatic functions of our body, heals the wound made by the surgeon, or mobilises defensive forces against an invasion of microbes. Only, it is very far from doing its business perfectly and its negligence leads to numerous evils. Impressionable, credulous, docile and therefore eminently suggestible, the Unconscious does not reason. It accepts and assimilates all ideas and images that may be presented to or imposed upon it and proceeds to model the human being under the influence of these ideas. Consequently, it cannot always be guided by suggestion alone. In fact it is well-known that will-power has no effect on our vegetative organs, i. e. on the Unconscious which regulates them.

The Unconscious registers and classifies, often without our knowledge, all the impressions we receive in the course of our lives and these are added to our mental inheritance derived from our ancestors. Suggestibility and imagination are its two principal faculties and its fundamental role is to regulate our vegetative life. It has also, however, a much more general function. The Unconscious, being the imaginative part of our mind, presides finally over the accomplishment of all our acts by the

impulses which it opposes to the deliberations of our reason, even against our will when there is a conflict between our will and the imagination. Our most important faculty is thus not our Reason, which comes from the Conscious, but Imagination, which comes from Unconscious."

This author shows all the importance of a well-directed imagination. Let the timid understand that if they are weak, it is their imagination that has gone wrong. Let him therefore alter the orientation of his imagination by the constant practice of auto-suggestion and lead it in the direction of serenity, confidence and moderate optimism, and he will find that he can do everything that he has to do with much less effort.

I do not advise the timid to make tenacious, or violent efforts or exert their will-power to the utmost. I would rather advise them to remain calm under all kinds of circumstances; and this is not acquired by an effort of will, but only by an inner feeling of confidence in auto-suggestion, practise it quietly. Do

not employ imperative formulas, Say "I can", but not "I *will*", because the latter implies the idea of something to be conquered, a false idea of fight. Too often we fight with air. Too often, like generous Don Quixotes, we tilt at windmills which encumber our distorted imagination.

"Struggle for Life" is a false concept. Life does not really imply a struggle, it implies understanding and nothing more. Is it any use to rush at an obstacle and break your head? When the captain of a ship sees a storm coming, he does not go straight at it full sail, but seeks to avoid it by getting round it. So in life, take care not to try to conquer the storm and remember that serenity, strategy and confidence have always led passion, pride and ambition by the nose. Napoleon, Joffre, Castelnau, Sarraill have led numberless crowds of poor devils on the field of battle and it was the nameless crowd that suffered but these names were remembered. Understand this and act accordingly.

R. D. KARVE.

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

Quite recently, a large number of Mahomedans in South India met in angry protest against certain remarks—alleged to be very offensive—made in a book written in Tamil by a Jesuit Father on the Prophet Mahomet. It was reported that at that meeting one man was killed and several wounded. and the

angry Mussulmans passed a resolution demanding that the said book be proscribed and the author of it punished.

We believe a compromise was reached when the author of the book in question undertook to expunge the remarks objected to and remove the copies already in circulation.

One hears a little too often in these days of such angry protests and even outrages, by over-sensitive Mahomedans whenever any remark, which they deem to be uncomplimentary on the prophet is made by anybody. The pity of it is that such scenes are not made by the illiterate class, but also by people of certain social standing. One can well understand them getting angry over malicious, insulting and scurrilous remarks about their prophet, but when it is only a question of honest opinion based on facts and couched in becoming and dignified language, the intolerance and sensitiveness of these Mahomedans become positively a danger and a nuisance.

* * *

When, however, they resort to violence and take the law into their own hands, as they unfortunately often do, their attitude becomes extremely serious and should be sternly put down. It was reported not long ago, that while a Hindu upcountry, accused of having made some offensive remarks on Prophet Mahomet, was moving about in a public place, a Mahomedan suddenly pounced on him and fatally stabbed him. It will be recalled that some years ago, a Hindu bookseller was similarly dealt with by a fanatic in Calcutta.

A few days back, the papers gave an account of another case of this nature, this time in Sind, in the Appellate Bench of the Judicial Commissioner's Court at Karachi. It would appear that whilst the High Court was disposing of the criminal appeal of one Maharaj Nathuram, who had been sentenced to eighteen months rigorous imprisonment on the charge of insulting the Prophet in his

book, "History of Islam," the poor man was suddenly stabbed to death in Court by two or three Mahomedans.

The boldness of the attack was described in "The Times of India" as follows:—

"While the Court was busy disposing of other appeals, a person is said to have whipped out a knife and stabbed Nathuram in the back. When Nathuram yelled, it is stated another man stepped forward and held him while the assailant stabbed him again in the stomach. Nathuram dropped on the floor bleeding profusely."

India is the only country in the world where adverse criticism and unpopular opinion on the character and methods of founders of religion is made a criminal offence:—Section 295A I.P.C. Is not this a great encouragement to fanatics?

* * *

Were such people made to understand that progress and enlightenment demand that religion, including its founders, are a matter of controversy and comment, we might hear less often of these intolerable outrages. An intelligent person would understand that the object of the Government in making such a law was, of course, quite laudable and reasonable in trying to prevent religious hatred and riots. But these ignorant and intolerant people do not seem to take it in this light. They probably imagine that their prophets are so sacrosanct, that even the Government should not allow anybody to say a word against them; and if anybody does, not only must the Government punish them, but also they must be allowed to enhance the sentence in the way they think fit! To our mind, the Government have made a blunder by interfering in these matters. It is possible that in time they will recognise the error of it.

Nothing will beat Reuter in frequently reminding us that we are still a race of grown-up children—Morons as they say in America:—All the details given about the activities of Prince George and his future bride the moment their engagement was announced would sicken any right-thinking person. It is a pity that the English Royal Family is not permitted, like other decent people, to enjoy its own private life without the minute details being duly broadcasted. How interesting it was to learn that the Queen was teaching the Young Princess how to dance and Prince George tired himself in executing a Scottish reel!

* * *

The papers recently announced a very interesting ceremony which took place in Bangalore in South India. Owing to the failure of rain in that locality, a body of young men went naked in the streets carrying a clay idol of the Rain God, *Jokumara*, with a live frog tied to it. They recited hymns songs and ballads, praying to the deity to send rain to Bangalore. They halted at every house and the inmates removed the idol from its basket, poured a bucket of water over its head and burnt camphor. Should we laugh at this when in London, this year, the Bishop of London held an impressive ceremony in which prayers were said to obtain rain?

Though the methods were different, the same mentality animated the good Bishop of London and the rain-maker of Bangalore. The African witch-doctor also belongs to the same school and there is no reason why civilized people should smile at his antics as those of a barbarian. Are we really civilized yet?

* * *

Mahatma Gandhi is always very profound when he dwells on the question of

God. His familiarity with that elusive Being is so great that he knows all about His ways and designs. He is certain that "belief in God is co-existent with human-kind", which means that Mahatma Gandhi is perfectly acquainted with the belief of man the moment he appeared on this planet 500,000 years ago as scientists say he did. Whatever might have been the belief of pre-historic man, we know that the moment he began to speak of his god or gods, he has pictured him or them in diverse ways. To the average man now, after thousands of years of thinking and belief, God is a living being—a sort of an old man in the skies. For others, he is Love, Mind, an Immanence, a Celestial Mathematician, an Universal Architect, or an undefined Reality. For Mahatma Gandhi he is Truth. It would appear that in searching for Truth we discover God. For some other fortunate beings, he is a Banker in the clouds who always supply his favourites with money if they keep on good terms with him.

* * *

We mentioned in our last issue that the Great War is responsible for the intellectual set-back one witnesses in Europe at present. Every day evidences are forthcoming that there is a revival of superstitions there and people are not happy without them. In England according to the English papers, a large number of people now believe in *Witch-Craft* and they perform elaborate ceremonies in the pursuit of it. Spiritualism, of course, has now become so fashionable that only cranks and imbeciles do not believe in it. People are taking great interest in Astrology and Fortune-telling has become a lucrative profession. The "News of the World" tells us that in London

society women and others flock to scores of luxuriously-appointed saloons in which incense is burnt and other agents and instruments of mysticism are employed. That paper says that the business is not confined to London, but is practised in most of the larger provincial cities to an extent hitherto unsuspected. Little wonder! For every one says that Science is dead and Mysticism is triumphant.

* * *

Is there any cause to marvel after this that the professors of occultism and the teachers of mysticism of all denominations are having a glorious time and are proclaiming with joy that Materialistic Science is dead and Mysticism has again come into its own? Well may these charlatans rejoice and sneer at free-thought, Rationalism, and all that is still sane in this world. Was it not Ingersoll who told us that in the Middle Ages Europe was a vast lunatic asylum and the priests were the keepers of the same? We are fast getting into that condition again.

* * *

Mr. Albert Raymond, the well-known Bombay business man delivered an interesting lecture at the Y. M. C. A. Hall at Byculla in July last. The subject of his lecture was: "My view of Life as a Jew," a summary of which we publish in this issue. Mr. Raymond spoke as a sensible and intelligent man should. He told his audience that though he is a Jew, he does not believe all the extravagant things the average Jew is apt to in matter of religion and customs.

* * *

A Roman Catholic friend of mine, an intelligent lawyer, told me the other day that he was greatly edified by a sermon on the Trinity preached by a Jesuit some

time ago. In the opinion of the lawyer, that priest made it clear as daylight what the Trinity is and what is meant by it. I could only congratulate him as being one of those rare mortals who have completely understood that theological tangle. Incidentally, this shows how even a fairly educated man can be mystified by religious belief.

My friend, of course, confessed that he had not the slightest idea of the interminable wrangle and the great upheaval this question of the Trinity gave rise to. He appeared incredulous when I told him that this single question absorbed the attention of the Church for four hundred years, caused numerous schisms and sects and the death of hundreds of thousands of Christians who fought like wild beasts over the proper status of Jesus in the pantheon. Some maintained that he was HOMOUOUSIOS, that is to say, he was of the same essence with the Father, yet a different person, and one with, yet born of the Father; others maintained vehemently that he was HOMIOUSIOS, that is to say, God born in time and of similar essence with the Father. When it came to define the status of that mysterious being, the Holy Ghost, the dispute rose to fever heat. After 400 years of interminable quarrel which caused much hatred and bloodshed the question was at last settled in Oecumenical Council and became the dogma of the Church as we have it now. It is clear that these infallible people were not enlightened by the Holy Ghost on the subject as the Ghost, itself, was one of the subjects under dispute.

* * *

Speaking of this question in his latest book, Mr. H. W. Nevison, the well-known writer says:—

"The distinction between all these sects and heresies are hardly comprehensible except to the inspired subtlety of theological brains. Yet in the days of their origins the hardly preceptible differences and dogmas were matter of life and death, urged with a conviction so self-assured and a hostility so envenomed that hundreds of thousands of men, women and children were slaughtered in their defence or denial, and controversies over the unity or double nature of Christ's person or will caused as many violent deaths as the denial and assertion of his divinity."

It is indeed merciful that the Christians are mercifully unaware of all this. In their extreme innocence and naivety they imagine that from the beginning God, himself, inspired all the dogmas which form the creed today. *Beati pauperes Spirituo.*

* * *

It is with great regret that we announce the death of Mr. F. S. Taleyarkhan, Barrister-at-law, one of the most eminent lawyers of Bombay. This sad event took place suddenly the other day. As our readers know, Mr. Taleyarkhan and Mr. C. Kanuga, also a great lawyer of this city, undertook to defend us in February last when we were charged under Section 295A I. P. C. with offending the religious susceptibilities of Mahomedans and Catholics. Though Mr. Taleyarkhan was not a Rationalist at the time of his death, he was for many years a member of the Rationalist Press Association of London. He had great sympathy with Rationalism. We offer our deep condolence to the bereaved family, specially to his son, who is also a Barrister-at-law. He helped his father greatly in our case.

THE ALLEGED DEATH OF "SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM"

The absurd belief-so widespread, mostly in English-speaking countries only, that the recent discoveries in physical science have killed the scientific materialism of the last century could not fail, in due time, to reach Bombay. Considering that this belief which has been so sedulously and casuistically fostered by clerical propagandists (especially of the Protestant sects) and so credulously imbibed by many simple souls, thanks to the active enterprise of newspapers and magazines of England and America, it is certainly remarkable that it took such a long time to figure in our newspapers here as sensational news.

But the silly news sooner or later had to come. The address of Sir James Jeans at the meeting of the British Association in Aberdeen last month was, perhaps, the long-sought occasion for a paper like "The Times of India" to inform the Bombay public of the awfully sad news of the demise of the Victorian Science. This occupied the leader columns of that paper and anything more silly is hard to imagine. One of the readers of that paper, however, evidently did not think so. He immediately wrote a long rigmarole praising and admiring that leader for the wise things said on the occasion, and he added his own conviction that

the Scientific Materialism of the last century was, indeed, dead as the dodo! Both that leading article and the letter in question could not fail to lecture us very solemnly on the fallibility of science and the enduring verities of religion. Both assured us that it was the new discoveries in science which have operated so fatally on the old theories. These new discoveries, it would appear, are so significant that a perfect intellectual revolution has set in and with it so complete a new orientation, as to make a revised interpretation, both in science and philosophy, inevitable. What these new discoveries are and in what way they have discredited the old science, was, of course, left for the readers to find out, as it is not improbable that both the writer of that leader and the admiring correspondent, with millions of other folk who repeat this, had not the slightest idea of what it is all about. The thing that mattered was to repeat the usual nonsense one hears so often nowadays. Although we were certain that all this was pure Greek for the average newspaper reader of Bombay, we thought it necessary, in the interest of truth, to challenge this mischievous misrepresentation of the real state of things in the scientific world. We are sorry to say that our effort in this direction proved a failure for the simple reason that the paper in question was in no mood to be contradicted and it simply ignored a letter addressed to it on the subject. Incidentally, this explains why it is so difficult to contradict this silly misrepresentation.

Fortunately in Bombay, there are other papers with a better sense of impartiality and fair play and we had no difficulty in persuading the courteous editors of the Bombay Sentinel and the Bombay

Chronicle to allow us the use of their columns for a true exposition of the question. In three short articles we were thus able, to the best of our abilities under the circumstances, to explain how this news originated, namely, the apparent confusion that the Theory of Relativity brought on the question of Space, Time, Causality and certain other cosmological problems; the interesting revelations of the Quantum Theory, the composition of the Atom and some other discoveries in physical science which have been interpreted by many to be of so revolutionizing a nature as to upset completely the old theories on the nature of matter and energy. These and the mystical speculations of some scientists encouraged the pulpit and the press to spread the news that modern scientists were abandoning the old materialistic attitude and were doing their utmost to reconcile science with religion. As far as this goes, there is really nothing of a sensational nature about this. Ever since Darwinism came in conflict with religious teaching, one has often heard this outcry against "Materialism" and the assurance that such a godless doctrine would die a speedy death. We have heard too often of the death or impending death of Darwinism proclaimed by half-educated priests and parsons to wonder that they only require but the scantiest encouragement to proclaim from the housetop the discomfiture of science and the revival of religion. This is indeed their old game. Only this time the clamour has become much louder owing to the fact that a powerful propaganda, supported by some scientists eminent in their own fields, has feverishly worked in favour of religion at the expense of science said to be discredited! It may not be out of place

here to remark that the bogey of Bolshevism is probably at the bottom of this ardent desire to revive religion, and that these mystical and politically-minded scientists consider it a patriotic duty to discourage anything likely to foster a "godless" society as Russia is trying to do.

To refer to our articles in the Bombay Sentinel and the Bombay Chronicle, following the lines laid down by Mr. Joseph McCabe in his admirable book "The Riddle of the Universe today", we drew attention to the fact that it was ridiculous to speak of Scientific Materialism as Science could not be anything else but materialistic seeing that in all the branches of knowledge it deals with, it is, and can only be concerned with the study and investigation of matter and energy in all their properties. That people who were repeating all the nonsense they read on the subject in newspapers, religious journals and magazines, had not the slightest idea of what they were talking about, and if pressed to explain what they understood by scientific Materialism and how the new discoveries have killed it would be utterly unable to answer coherently. Attention was also drawn to the fact that it was idle to speak of the annihilation of the old science considering that our civilization with all the magnificent scientific discoveries and inventions that have enriched it are based on the old science and that these new discoveries have not added to them as yet in a practical manner. One would have thought that this should have been enough to convince thoughtful people that all this talk of the death of the old science was pure nonsense not worthy of a moment consideration. But no. A few readers of those papers would have it that it is true that

the new science, as they call it, has discredited and killed the old, though they could not say how. All they did was to quote vague statements from various encyclopædias and sundry books and other publications that it was so. It is evident that these people could not understand that our contention precisely, was that such publications are responsible for these extravagant and erroneous opinions.

No Rationalist should allow these misrepresentations to go uncontradicted. He should remind people who glibly talk of Materialistic Science and so forth that it is religion, indeed, which is grossly materialistic. With all their mystic talk which they imagine to be very spiritual, their conception of what they imagine to be supernatural things is nothing but materialistic. Their heaven with their god sitting on a throne, their hell full of fire, their souls which are sentient, their angels who weep at the sight of a converted sinner, their devils with horrible black bodies and long tails, have all been drawn from pictures in this materialistic world!

For us, Rationalists, all these agitations and rejoicing about the discomfiture of Science and the revival of religion are indeed good news. They show the desperate state in which religion has fallen and the mighty efforts that are being made to give it a longer lease of life. Theologians are catching at every straw they can lay hold of. They claim that Mind is beyond the province of Science to investigate. They consider it to be a mysterious something, immaterial and inexplicable. They say that as Scientists cannot explain it, it is a problem that concerns religion only. They claim that even if it is admitted that Man is ascended from the lower animals his

soul was implanted in him during a certain stage of his evolution and their god did it. They claim that Evolution supports religion in its contention that nature shows a purpose in its scheme and the finger of God can be discerned in it and finally they contend that even if the mythical part of Christianity is admitted, its spiritual value cannot be disputed and their profession is justified in teaching it. Roman Catholicism and ~~and~~ Fundamentalism, of course, are not bothered with what Science says or not. They continue in the old groove, depen-

ding on ignorance to carry on. To think that there are many wisecracks who believe that there is no longer any conflict between Religion and Science! One may as well think that eternal peace now reigns between the Deer and the Tiger. If a deep hatred did not exist between religion and science, one would never hear of such boisterous advertisement and rejoicings at the death of Scientific Materialism and the revival of religion or rather Christianity.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

GURU CRAZE IN WESTERN INDIA

The drift towards obscurantism and a vague fascination for all that is occult and against reason which has led to a blind worship of impostors even by a large section of educated people in this country was commented upon by Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, Vice-Chancellor in his lecture on "Rational Outlook" delivered at a meeting of the University Philosophical Association held on Oct. 2 at the old Chemistry Theatre of the Lucknow University.

Dr. Paranjpye emphasised that man being gifted with rational faculty should guide his conduct by reason alone and reject all theories of life that did not appeal to his reason.

It was curious to note that reason played a negligible factor in guiding the actions of a vast majority of people. In spite of their education they were as gullible as the most ignorant villagers and chose to be driven blindly in the fields of politics, religion and other

matters by self-styled leaders who claimed to have derived inspirations from mysterious sources.

Apropos of the present superstitious mentality of a large section of educated Indians Dr. Paranjpye read two articles entitled "The Guru Craze" and "Modern Deification" which had been written sometime ago but which still adequately summed up the blind worship of impostors by the present generation.

Referring to what he described as "the Guru Craze" Dr. Paranjpye said:

"To careful observers of the intellectual life of a nation it is no new thing to be told that there are ebbs and flows in the hold that several philosophies have upon the educated part of the community. Some forty years ago Mill was a name to conjure with and all educated people were followers of Mill, Spencer and others of the rationalistic school. After the exaggerated worship of Mill, or

rather in consequence of it, has come the reaction, when it is the prevailing fashion of the exponents of a mere dry philosophy, to sneer at him and his followers. The cold light of reason, so runs the fashionable cant of the day, is not sufficient to satisfy the wants of the inner soul of man.

Growth of Occultism.

"I do not, however propose to discuss the prevailing intellectual atmosphere of the West. I wish to refer only to a backwash of the same movement as seen in India viz., the growing tendency towards occultism among the educated classes of India. The increasing following of such cults as Theosophy, Vedantism, and what for want of a better word, we may call Vivekanandism, is due to the same intellectual or "quasi" intellectual movement. But in these instances at any rate there is an avowed appeal to the intellect. Close followers of Indian thought have recently observed a far more vicious tendency among the educated people of Western India at least. I mean the absolute abdication of all reasoning faculty which consists in adopting a "guru" in the religious sense of the word. A "guru" is a person whose every word is a law to his disciple and whose command is to be obeyed and not argued with however absurd it may be.

"Ancient Hindu books have fancifully exaggerated panegyrics of the "guru": but for some years after the introduction of Western culture the worship of the "guru" decreased. But recently we have been observing a recrudescence of the cult of the "guru" and of the growth of the practice among educated Indians. Leading lights of Indian

society have fallen victims to this new—or rather—revived fad. The forms it presents are diverse. But it is interesting to consider the qualifications—or rather the want of them—that are absolutely requisite in a perfect specimen of the genus "guru."

Must be Shameless.

"The indispensable characteristic of a "guru" is a perfect freedom from all ordinary conventions of society, what we ordinary mortals would call a sense of shame. Sufficient clothing is not at all necessary and one may in fact classify "gurus" by the scantiness of their vestments. Filthiness of habits would greatly help in attaining to the select circle. Acquaintance with the inside of goal is no obstacle to this consummation. After some time, religion, caste or creed is a matter of indifference. Thus we may have a Mahomedan 'guru' of the Hindus. Reputation for possessing an ability to fast for a considerable interval is a sure passport. This may be a mere reputation, as you will not be called on to prove your ability. A few disciples properly trained will puff up your merits in this direction. A reputed abhorrence of money will work wonders. You will find in a short time money actually thrown at your feet which you may then carefully collect with affected indifference. A rumour about your having fallen in a trance will give no end of help. One trance—real or feigned—will enable you all your life to relate stories of divine visions. With this reputation to back you, it will do you no harm if afterwards you learn to bring on these trances artificially by partaking of 'ganja,' opium or alcohol.

Charmed Position.

"After the charmed position of a 'guru' is attained and you have a few disciples you may do anything you wish. Your circle of disciples will always interpret your actions in a suitable manner. Have you a special predilection for disciples in good official positions? You will be credited with the purest motives of converting the select of the land. If such a disciple builds you a grand house or sends you a parcel of strawberries every day, it will only be counted as example of his devotion and not of your wordly nature. Do you particularly favour disciples of the softer sex? It will be said in explanation that you are only following the proper way in uplifting the world as the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.

"You will find that you are soon reputed to be a prophet. In keeping up this reputation you will have to exercise some common sense. But there are several ways open to you for this purpose. Of course the commonest ways is to give vague answers. But another and far better way of answering an inquiry about the future is to jabber out some entirely meaningless word or phrase. When a Bombay Shetia ask you whether his speculation will prove profitable you may reply that the mango in your hand is sweet? Does a racing barrister ask about the prospects of the horse that he is backing? A reply that it is cloudy to-day will send him into ecstasies. Is it the wife of a subordinate judge who wants to know whether the interesting event that is soon to occur is to result in a boy or girl you may say that the train is late. All these answers to your questions will be

properly interpreted and always correctly after the event. Every such answer will only add to your holiness and renown as a prophet.

Tricks of the Trade.

"A few tricks of the trade have also to be learnt. First of all a 'guru' must have some peculiarity which distinguishes him from other 'gurus'. Thus one may be a prostrating 'guru' as he prostrates himself before everybody he meets. Another may be a kissing "Guru" whose peculiarity is more agreeable. A third may be a blessing 'guru' blessing everybody he meets. Yet another may be a snuff-giving 'guru' who gives a pinch of snuff to his visitors. His disciples will be found to treasure up these pinches as precious heirlooms. Then a few idiosyncracies about your food and drink will do you no harm. You may be sure that your disciples will be keen in fulfilling them to the very letter.

Again it will be a very great addition to the holiness of a 'guru' if he is known to have been a great reformer before he turned his ambitions towards 'gurudom.' The more heterodox he was before his conversion the greater his merit afterwards. In fact there is at present no such royal road to popularity as to have one's fling first, and then turn a 'guru.' In this land of universal gullibility any person who is sufficiently eccentric is sure to get a following. If he be enterprising enough he will even be able to spread his fame beyond the bounds of India.

American Experience.

"A trip to America will work marvels and some crazy Americans who are always on the look out for novelty will hail him as a new 'avatar.' The penny

magazines recording the doings of a microscopic society of disciples who in the universal American style have ready-made titles of Professor, Colonel or Judge, when sent back here will be used in its turn as a further advertisement of the 'saint' who has received recognition at the hands of the most advanced spirits of the civilised west—so would run the usual jargon of his duped disciples. Perhaps a 'muth' will be established with an appropriate brotherhood and the whole conspiracy of deception carried on with a perfect organisation.

"I do not mean to imply that the whole business is a tissue of organised

conscious deceit. Few are conscious hypocrites, a few others are self-deceived, while the vast majority consists of people who have a vague fascination for all that is occult and against reason and satisfy this bent in the way that offers itself. A few of these people have ulterior motives and should not be surprised if some of these were found to be political. But I appeal to the better nature of my countrymen whether it is in the best interests of the country to laud up such men—who to judge them mildly are self-deceived idiots—as models for the ordinary man to follow.

EVOLUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE BHAGVAD-GITA

(Submitted to the Indian Philosophical Congress, 10th Session Waltair.)

Never have the contradictions of society shown themselves more acutely than at the present time when the face of the civilised world "is lined by the ghastly and brutal features of barbarism that have taken shape so rapidly during the past few years." "Those that have thrived and built up their institutions on a false and unscientific practice of social life hasten to assist in diverting the minds of man from the real problems that face him." Prof. H. Levy, in the *Literary Guide*, Sept. 13th p. 167) A new distortion of science has set in during the past ten years that covers physics, Chemistry, Biology, Ethics, Aesthetics, and even to some extent Sociology. A deeper and deeper mysticism clouds intelligence and confuses the understanding. A close examination of the sociological problems of the time reveals the tendency

toward Social Mysticism typified by the 'Creative Evolution' of Bergson, and the writings of ecclesiastics like the Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Barnes), Dean Inge (of St. Paul's Cathedral), Whitehead and Idealist Scientists like Sir J. Jeans, and Prof. Eddington. 'The Riddle of the Universe To-day' (J. Mc. Cabe, publ. Watts. London) shows that in every branch of science, the drive has been consistently towards a deeper and deeper understanding of the nature of matter 'both in the living and the non-living forms.' In the "New Background of Science" Sir J. Jeans argues (p. 298) that as the 'beginning of the road by which we explore nature is mental, the chances are that the end also will be mental." If the political face of Europe is disfigured by the clash of principles as between Russia, Italy and

Germany and the rest, the contrast between Idealism and Materialism is no less keen in Western Philosophy. The antithesis between Religion and Science, Theology and Social Practice, Philosophy and Life is obtruding despite all efforts to discover the formula of their harmonic application. The Bhagvad-Gita, that is claimed to have effected unity amidst the warring theories of the Darshanas, the systems of philosophy that grew in ancient India, and to have presented the essence of Vedic Dharma, may with some advantage be utilised to synthesise the Gnana and Vignana, knowledge now available in the varied fields of Religion, Theology, Philosophy, and Science.

The dualism between mind and matter is an eternal problem. The Gita (XIII, 20) supports Descartes' position. "Prakritim Purushamechaiva Viddhyanadi ubhavapi : Matter and Spirit are both fundamentals, without beginning. This again is found in XV, 16 : Dva vimau purushau loke kshrascha akshara evacha : there are two entities in the world, the destructible, and the permanent ; all beings are destructible, while the unchanging is called the indestructible. While the ideal is conceived to be permanent, unchanging, perfect, and static, the world of matter is seen to be impermanent, changeful, imperfect, and dynamic.

The logical correlates of idealism and materialism are the illusion-doctrine, the Vivarta-vada, such as has been propounded by Shankara Acharya, and the Law of Evolution, such as has been formulated by western science. It is no accident that the idealist turns away from the fleeting forms of material existence, as unrealities, the product of

Maya, ignorance, Prakriti, and in this respect the Hindu Vedantin, the poetry of Shelly and Wordsworth and the political and philosophical thought of Carlyle and Emerson are the predecessors-in-interest of the Church-dignitaries, and the Scientists of our day named above. The ideal is unmodified, perfect, absolute Truth, where-of the actualities of life are fleeting shadowy forms. The latter are relative and so false, imperfect. They are *Asat*, while the Reality is *Sat*.

The idealist stand of the Gita is transparent. 'Tvamavyayah sasvata Dharma gopta : 'Then are Eternal Dharma's changeless guardian.' (XI, 18) "Anadi vannirgunatvat paramatma ayanavyayah : without beginning, devoid of qualities, imperishable and Supreme." (XIII, 32). "Amritasya avyayaschahcha, sasvatasyacha Dharmascha : immortal, indestructible, of immemorial Rectitude (Dharma)." (XIV, 27). "Vedaishha sarvai rahameva vedyo, vedantakrit veda videva chaham : the goal of knowledge of all Vedas, the one knower thereof, in fact, the maker of Vedanta." (XV, 15). Alike is the promise of attainment by man of the Supreme Seat called the Brahmi Bhuta Sthithi, (II, 72) which is eternal, and indestructible, Sasvatam padamavyayam (XVIII, 56) and everlasting, peaceful : Santim, sthanam prapsyasi sasvatam, (XVIII, 62).

The human spirit is invested with this ideal perfection when the Gita reminds us that weapons cleave him not, nor fire burneth him, nor do waters wet him, nor the wind drieth away (II, 23). "Nityah sarvagatah, sthanuh, achaloyam, sanatanah : perpetual, all-pervading, stable, unmoved, and ancient. (II, 24) There is a reality beyond phenomenal existence, life which is *Sat* and the unreal hath no being.

The truth about them both is seen by philosophers ; (II, 16, Tatvadarsibhih, the seers of the essence of existenc.) Those that take the stand on the Vivarta-vada, (the theory of illusion, that denies reality to the material phenomena) lay stress on "Nasate vidyate bhavo" (the Asat: matter has no existence. But the principle of conservation of energy and the indestructibility of matter that has been resolved into a unity in modern science by the breaking-up of the atom into electron-proton systems may be deemed to have been foreshadowed in :

Avinasitu tadviddhi yena sarma
midam tatam
Vinasa mavyaya syasya na kasehit
kartu marhati (Gita, II, 17).

(That by which all the universe is provided in indestructible. Nor may anything bring about the ruin of the imperishable one.)

We start therefore with the fundamental basis of idealist perfection which explains material universe negatively, by denying its existence any reality. We find an echo of this in Bradley's "Appearance and Reality" (p. 283):—

"The world of physical science, is not something independent, but is a mere element in one total experience." Sir J. Jeans relies on it. (See p. 68, the New Background of Science.) The material universe according to both is non-existent in reality, except in so far as it forms part of a universal Mind, which, according to the latter, may only think, Mathematically. "The old dualism of mind and matter seems likely to disappear through substantial matter resolving itself into a creation and manifestation of mind. (Sir J. Jeans, The Mysterious Universe, p. 137). In annihilating matter

the ghost of the old dualism is thus laid in peace.

There are two scales to the balance. Mentalism is one of the two, while matter is the second. Bradley treats matter as an element in one total *experience*, and as all experience is psychic, the idealistic predilections of these authors are reflected in their language. Even idealism is a partial view of reality. The Gita seems to be more impartial, when it says: "Vishtabhyaha midam kritsnam ekamsena sthitho jagat." (X, 42; I pervade the universe with a fragment of mine, and yet remain whole.) This is in turn the echo of the Upanishads; the Purusha Sukta reads Padesyaha bhavat punah: I enter in the fourth part into making up the universe again. Padesya viswa bhutani, tripadasya amritam divi, tripadurdhva udaitpurushah: a fourth part of this Paramatma is the entire universe of existence, the three-fourth remaining indestructible, and self-luminous, high above the phases of evolution. The physical universe as an Amsa of the Brahman, however attenuated a fraction of its nature it may comprise, will certainly be reckoned to be more real than when it is swept aside as merely illusory. As Max Muller stated the objection to a wholesale 'Vivarta' view of life "there is always something on which illusion is at work, and which cannot be deprived of its reality." (Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, p. 185). The concept of an Iswara fractionally entering into the get-up of the world has the added advantage that, unlike Jeans's Great Mathematician whose thoughts are unrelated to the affairs of actual life, much as the solution of conic sections does not implement human happiness. Brahman holds some stake at least to the extent of his fractional permeation,

in the course of its march. But it rests, in the human philosophers to shape divinity as they choose, in terms of the human virtues of mercy, benevolence, and justice or otherwise.

Writing about "Diderot's Atheism" Norman L. Torrey brings out the argument to a point. (See Literary Guide, September, 1834, p. 171.) "If God's justice differs from man's notion of justice and passes his comprehension, then man has no right to use the same term for both. If God's goodness is not our goodness, we should choose rather a meaningless term for an incomprehensible thing and say for instance that God is "blictri". It is the human touch that counts even in our ideas about God.

Modern philosophers have pondered over the Being and the Becoming of the Supreme Principle as phasal expressions thereof. A little reflection will reveal that these simply replace two of the trinitarian concepts of the Hindu Theology. Being stands for Vishnu, Becoming is Brahma, and nonbeing or destruction is Siva, the triple fundamentals of existence. How the universe of life began is indicated in the Gita (XV, 7):—

Mamaivamso jivaloke jivabhutassanatanh
Manashshathani indriyani prakritis-
thani karshati.

(A fragment of Myself, transformed in the finite world into immortal soul, draws close unto itself the six senses including mind, rooted in matter.) This cannot be explained in terms of illusion, for then it would involve Brahman in self-deception. Rather we see in it the attempt to explain the beginnings of evolution. Creative Evolution, with apologies to our Bergsonian friends "Bhutabhavodbhava

kare visargah karma sangnitah : that act of giving away is called Karma which emanates beings." (VII, VIII, 3).

That process whereunder the Infinite is conceived as assuming the role of finite life is naturally called the sacrifice. We meet with analogous thought in the religious literature of the west, as when the Christ is understood to be the supreme Sacrifice of God, the Son, to God, the Father.

"Adhi yegno a hamevatra, dedhe dehabhrutamvara," (Gita, VIII, 4): the knowledge of Sacrifice describes Me, the embodied one. I, in the body am the Sacrifice."

"Adhaita matmahah pratima masjujata, yadyagnam tasma dahuh, prajapatir Yagna ityatmanotyeta, pratima masrujata." (Satapatham, XI, 1, VIII, 3).

(God created his image called sacrifice. Hence he is known verily as the sacrifice.) This is very near the saying that God made man in his own image. An elaborate picture of this celestial Sacrifice, Yegna, is contained in the Purusha Sukta, in which the Purusha is the *Havis* (fire-offering.)

"Yat purushana havisha", the sacrificial beast "Abadhnan purusham pasum" which is bound over before being killed in the ritual. "I am the oblation I am sacrifice, the offering, the herb, mantram, butter and fire (Gita, IX, 16)."

The world of matter has now undergone critical study. The battering of the atom under the influence of immense electric power has disclosed that what was previously believed to have been an indivisible unit consisted of minute electric changes called electrons circling at proportionately large distances around

the positive proton, much as the planets in the solar system revolve round the sun. The atom is now found to be mostly empty space lying between them, just like the inter-stellar space that divides astronomical bodies. One physicist pictures the proton-electron relation so that when the proton is magnified to the size of a plum, the electrons resembles bees flying about it at a hundred yards distance. The mystery of the macrocosmic Akasa (sky) penetrates into the body of the atom no less and if photo-electric effects can trace the course of an electron, what else may defect the potency of the intervening void, from where it may be considered to have withdrawn itself? To admit that a huge proportion of physical nature is yet a sealed book, is not to decry the validity of scientific knowledge as much as to say that the material universe is itself a complete illusion. What is at least an Amsa (fraction, fragment, or emanation) from the Brahman cannot in reality be wiped out as non-existence. In fact some earlier texts in the Rig Veda and the Upanishads give place to matter at least as respectable as mentalism. I have referred to them in some detail in my recent book "The Composite Doctrine" and shall content myself with referring to one passage in Taithiriyopanishad (II, 7) "Asadva idamagra esit, tatovai sadajayata, tadatmanam svayamkuruta," which apparently gives the palm the *Asat*, or matter. The Gita (IX, 19) declares: "I am both Being and non-Being" (Sadasatchaham Arjuna.) Yet in another context occurs: Aksharam sadasat tatparam yat: unperishing, Being, Non-being. That Supreme, (Gita, XI, 37). As if to emphasise that compound of oxygen and hydrogen is

neither of them, the Gita (XIII, 13) points out that the primary principle could be neither *Sat* or *Asat*: Na sattan-masaduyate, but lies beyond the range of both. To identify truth with either would be a limitation, as much as to identify God with godness would be to fetter his omnipotence. His Vibhuti (Sovereignty) includes existence and non-existence, pleasure as well as pain (Sukham dukkham, bhavo a bhavo, Gita, X, 4) "I make good, I create evil" (Bible, Isaiah, XLV, 7). "Amritamchaiva mrutyuscha" (Immortality and also death, Gita, IX, 19.) To evolve a benevolent agency from the fundamental unity underlying these concepts is no easy task, and the divisions of sociological workers on distinct lines are nothing unnatural. The world is in need of an Iswara at once concerned in it, and seated beyond the range of its mundane considerations. No wonder that philosophical thought flounders in the mystery.

The trend of mentalism that relegated the physical world into an element of one total experience (Vide, Bradley quoted supra) brings forth the statement from Sir Jeans: "We are beginning to suspect that mind is the creator, and governor, of the realm of matter, the mind in which the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown exist as thoughts." (The mysterious Universe, p. 137). Just as *experience* involves psycho'logical processes, the correlative on the material side is represented by *event*, a word which since Einstein propounded the Law of Relativity has acquired a scientific significance. Just as events in history have their place and time assigned to them, in the scientific sense, all objects, physical and mental

are events. Each one of these events has its world-line, drawn precisely in its settings of time, place and circumstance, including its casual antecedents. There is no reason to suppose that the Bhagavad Gita favoured the mentalist description of the universe as an *experience* more than countenanced the fact of its existence as *one total event*. The use of the word Brahma-Bhuta in VI, 27, and XVIII, 54 is consistent with the physical view of the fundamental structure behind all experience. The contact with that unitarian element (Brahma Samsarsa, VI, 28) is contrasted with intercourse resulting from external stimuli which yield the dualism of heat and cold, pleasure and pain II, 14). Rather the analogy of physical entry into the subtle element named the Brahman is too long drawn. "Tato mam tatvato gnatva visate tadantaram" (XVIII, 55): having known me thus essence, thereafter they enter into me. The entry into this state dispels all illusion, and even at death it connected riddance from further rebirth (II, 72.).

Religious, philosophical and even scientific thought has been drawn into division owing to the persistence of the two fold method of approach, the natural and what has been called the super-natural. Attempts have been made to explore the avenues of compromise between them by thinkers of all ages. Historic conjunctions have helped either to bridge the gulf by tolerance or widen the breaches through persecution. The Sanatana Dharma has been the product of the diverse forces that operated in this country. It is no accident that in the Bharata Varsha, Aviroda the way of concord and tolerance is recognised as the supreme rule. In spite of the

inconsistencies, the conflicts among the branches of knowledge, the desire to approximate to truth from every side is unquenched." Just as the Modern Physicist finds it hard to dispense with either the particle-theory or the wave theory, as both help to explain different phases of the phenomena of matter and radiation, and is thus forced to conclude, that electrons behave as particles under certain conditions and as waves under others, a synthetic view of both the Vivarta Vada (illusion theory) and Parinama-Vada (evolution) seems to be requisite to comprehend the processes at work and form an adequate picture of the universe. "(The composite Doctrine, Passed through a gas, the train of electrons behave as particles, while their passage through a thin metal film produces the wave-like motion. It is alike possible to view the continuous flow of events which is the universe, both as an illusion, and an evolution, the gradual unfoldment of pre-existing stages." (Ibid.) If we are able to conjure up in our mind the rise and fall of the Solar Empire, the birth and extinction of the planetary family that resulted from the column of incandescent gases that was torn off from the body of the sun by the gravitational pull of another passing star, treating this as one event, we shall be able to realise the possibility of a universal vision, whereof illusion and evolution are but partial descriptions. Yet it is not impossible to think of the birth, subsistence, and extinction of any of the astronomical bodies or groups of bodies as mere astronomical EVENTS. "The space-time continuum, that mysterious four-dimensional alley of Akasa and Kala, is the Adhibhuta (super-element) called the Brahman. "Mama yonir mahat Brahma."

(XIV, 3): this Great Brahman is my womb, and out of it evolves the universe. The release of the categories, time, space, casuality is the Vyakta (development) and Vikara (modification) of the Brahma-Bhuta. A movie-picture in which the drama of the rise and fall of the Solar Empire is crammed into a single show will perhaps express the Viswarupa-Darshan envisaged in the Gita (XI, 28, 29 &c.) As our powers of observation increase, as the speed of our experience is enhanced, the velocity with which the events shape themselves rises. If events are spread already in the space-time continuum, what constitutes our experience of them is simply our passage near them, like the point in the rim of a bicycle which touches the road along which its course lies. Our failure to have the entire photograph of the march of the bicycle on the road in our mind at one stroke of the display of the picture is the result of Avidya (ignorance by which we abstract away a fragment of the universe from the rest of the continuum, for which there is no warranty objectively. When we march on the bicycle along the road, spread before us is a stream of experience which we feel fresh at each moment, which would not have been the case had we the capacity to visualise the complete picture of our march at once. The sense of evolution, of progress is thus linked up with the same kind of abstraction, of fragmentation of the universe, of the delimitation of our experience there, confining it to specific bits of time and space instead of seeing it whole, the same process such as lies behind illusion, when we speak of the retrograde motion of a planet, or the march of the sun round the earth. The fuller grasp dispels illusion, as well as fulfils the path of evolution. He who is seated in the universal vision,

sees it whole, and is in perfect peace and internal happiness (V. 20, and 24) Brahmani Sthitah, and Antassuhha... Brahma-bhutoadhgatchati.)

The Gita does not ignore the fact that the universal Vision, the power to see it whole is not given in life, the span of finite existence. But the power may be developed to greater or less degree. "Divyam dadami te chakshuh": I give you the super eyes (Gita, XI, 8) and why not, when our microscope and the high-powered telescope supplement the normal sight of the retina, why not a faculty to see it fuller and better evolve in man? And the way of the development of that power of larger vision lies in detaching oneself from the lower stimuli. "Asanga Sastrona drudhena chitva" (having out asunder with the weapon of detachment, XV, 3). He who thinks on the objects of sense gets attached to them, and attachment breeds desire, and desire brings on anger, and anger disturbs knowledge, and the disturbed equilibrium leads to faulty memory, which kills reason, which in turn is the ruin (II, 62, 63). To get ever this chain of events, the balanced reason gets over good and evil, and that is Yoga, skill in action (II, 50). To him the benefactors and friends, foes, the indifferent, mediators, the haters, relatives, the asectics, and the evil-doers, stand on the same footing (VI, 6) and for him, happiness and misery, dress and gold, love and hate, fame and obloquy, friends and foes do not make any difference, for he is above the adjectival qualities (XIV, 24).

But in the fleeing poses of life is it possible to attain to the Yogic balance? (Chanchalatvat, VI, 33). Mental life is a constant flux, and cannot be arrested even as the flow of the air. (Vayeriva

sudushkaram, VI, 34). As the in-flow of oxygen affects the cells, the oxidation of the brain-tissue lead to corresponding mental-processes. Hence the Hata-Yoga Pradipika say :—"Dugdhambuvat sam-militau ubhautau, Tulyakriya manasa marutau he, Yate marut tatra manah-pravrittih, yate manastattre marutpravrittih, like milk and water both mix together, the mind and the air have similar action, where the air is, there the mind works, and where the mind is active, there the air operates," Not merely experience, but the whole gamut of existence inheres in the subtle Bhuta, element, the unitary principle." As the air prevades space, even so do being live and move in me (IX, 6)." One would put more than a mere simile, a significance higher than the mere figures of speech, something higher than mere analogy into the scientific content of these utterances. When the burning lamp is not disturbed by the blasts of wind (Yudha dipe nivatasthe, nengate sopama amrita, VI, 19) the Yogi that has attained the equipoise does not burn any portion of the tissue of his being. There is no oxidation of the brain-cells, or other portions of his physical structure, nor is there the expenditure involved in the processes of mentation.

The way of evolution lies in the elimination of these movements that injure the interests of the organism, and the perpetuation of these habits that further its growth. In the spiritual evolution of the individual self, the same method is indicated, the positive and the negative sides of which are both given in (VI 35), *Abhyasenatu Kaunteya Vairagyenacha grihyate*" by constant habit, and through detachment. The detachment, or turning away is from the reactions to the lower stimuli, e. g., of the senses, and the

practice is the perpetuation of these movements that lead up to the further stages of evolution. The Gita lays emphasis upon this potentiality of "Abyasa" and the notion that it inculcates the fatalistic attitude about the constant, unvarying soul-spirit of man is hardly justified. VI. 36;" It is possible by effect and skill to attain Yoga," Nor does the effort fail to leave its mark on the further stages of its evolution, as in the previous birth (VI, 43) which transmits the chromosomes imbedded in the cell-substance of the successive generations. For, none that did right may go amiss (*Nahi kalyana krit kaschit durgatim tata gatchati*, VI, 40) and even a mere contemplation of Yoga in thought excels the recitation of the scriptures (*Sabda Brahma*, VI, 44). The Yoga of practice (*Abhyasa*, VIII, 8) at all times (*saveshu kaleshu* VIII. 7) is the path of the deliberate, conscious evolution of the higher self (XII. 9) which is next only to be concentration needed to reach the higher perfection. The survival value given to habit which makes the burdens of life lighter, which enables man to overcome obstacles, nay which in the end turns his very sorrows into opportunities for deriving satisfaction (XVIII, 36, 37) is nothing opposed to the formation of similar courses of conduct in the lower planes of plant and animal life wherein the principle of natural selection is at work. But that the capacity to conscious perception, and perhaps to little extent of introspection, has stepped some into human life, the selective tendency is the same in method in the higher as in the lower life.

Evolution leads from the comparatively simpler forms of life to the building-up of structures more complex, and more specialised in function. The fear envi-

saged as to the annihilation of castes and their Dharma (I, 40 is answered (IV, 13) "they depend on the differences in qualities and acts," and again (XVIII, 41): "they are natural divisions resting on propensities."

Whether one approves of the caste-by-birth system or no, the division of class is there, and with it the differentiation of function, an index to evolution. As to complexity of structure, few may beat the Gita ideals: when the world is asleep, I gather in the inspiration, and when the world is wide awake, I see that there is nothing in it (*Ya nisa sarva bhutanam &c*, II, 69). It is darkness under the merely physical sun, when we are not able to read the lesson of life properly, and when the world gropes in the wilderness of night, the Yogi is radiantly alive. And again: He who sees inaction in action, and action in inaction is the doer of all right action (IV, 18). This philosophy has baffled many a thinker. Vedic ritual is not the true Karma, or action, nor is mere conformity to known forms of life. Like the sleeping-top the Yogi is fully alive. His harmony is undisturbed, his balance profound, the gyrations do not apparently strike observation. He has given up the fruit of his aspiration, and is not attracted or repelled by contrary forces. It is complexity of structure beyond comparison, which adverts to the caste-division and yet could sing: "*Vidya vinaya sampanne Brahmane gavi hastini, sunichaiva, svapakeshu Pandit has samadarsinah*" (V, 18): in the eyes of the learned, the Brahmin, the elephant, the cow, the dog, and the Paraih are equal. The spirit of the samanas permeates its teachings.

Neither does the Gita over-stress the importance of the Vedas. Its attitude

towards them is mainly selective (see II, 42 to 46) just as its explanation of the various darshanas is harmonic compromise. Give up the fruit of action, while acting, is both Sankhya and Yoga in a single breath, and it is not wisdom to see any difference between them (V, 4). The Vedas deal with the ideals to be attained by the three Gunas, but one should neither covet the fruits nor seek to retain them (II 45) and just as we use only so much water out of the tank full of water, even so, should the Brahmin derive like benefit from all the Vedas. Believers in the three Vedas conform to the ritual ordained therein, and reach the goal of enjoying celestial bliss (Cf. IX, 20) But that experience, however long, and well meritted, is not final. The merit decreases by user, and the usual cycle of ascent and descent occurs. (IX, 21). The Gita looks over the shoulders of the Vedic ideal and repeatedly states that the Vedas, the Yegnas (sacrifices) Tapas (austerities) and Dana (charity) are unequal to the Yoga enjoined by it. (See, VIII, 28). The Yogi is higher than the austerities, the knowledge of the Pandits, and the ritualists. (VI, 46). The capacity to see it whole (the universal Vision) is not given to the Vediclore, the sacrificer, the almsgiver, and the Karma-deer, nor the austere-mam (XI 48 and 53). Yet the paths of Karma, (action,) Gnana (knowledge) and Bhakti (devotion) are not set the one against the other. It is an interpretational harmony that it appears in the teachings of the Gita, rather than that stringent regard for the Sanctity of the Word (Sabda Brahma), which characterises the firm adherence of the followers of other Scriptures. With regard to these, the attitude of the Gita is plain. "*Ye yadha mam prapadyante stadhaiva bhajamyaham*" : to the manner

in which men resort to me, I respond relatively (IV, 11). It is really the product of high evolutionary experiment that would detach itself from all aspects of individual identity and the self-effacement is perhaps no better achieved elsewhere than in the cosmopolitan outlook of the song. To the difficulties raised in the first chapter as to the conflicting forces ranged on the opposite sides both of which are drawn from among close relation? (I 37) the answer of detachment comes with greater force "Asakti ranabhishwogah putra dara grihadishui" (XIII, 10) unattached to sons, wife, and house. It is a pointer to social evolution based on the effacement of the prevailing conceptions of family-life.

CONCLUSION :

"The world by wisdom knew not God" saith the Bible (Corinthians, i, 27) "Bhaktya tvananyayasakya ahamevam vidhojuna: by devotion to me alone may I be perceived" signs the Gita (XL, 54). And the man consists of his faith, rather is he identified with its Saradhamayoyam purushah, yeyat chraddhaha sa evasah (Gita. XVII, 3). It is of vital concern to the race whether individuals place their faith rightly, on what their faith rests. There was a time in the history of man "of visiting the iniquity of the father upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of those that hated" the existing order of beliefs and dogmas. (Of. The Bible, Exod us, XX). So the Gita (XVI, 20. asurim yoni mapanna &c.) cast into demoniacal wombs, deluded birth after birth, and sank the unfaithful into the lowest depths. The old beliefs started with the heart of man "decietful above all things and desperately wicked" (Bible, Jeremiah,

xvii, 9) even as his mind is restless, impetuous, and difficult to bend. (Gita, VI, 34).

But the faith according to the Gita rests on the evolutionary betterment of the individual and of the race. Unlike the jealous God of the Semites, probably historic settings are responsible for the metaphysical stand that the Lord receives neither the evil-doing nor well-doing of any (Gita, V, 15). It is indeed natural philosophy that relegates causality to the domain of nature, (V, 14). The manifestation of nature is invested with a reality, which is the bedrock of evolution. Nature is indifferent to human values, mud, stone, and gold, are the same to it. (Samaloshtha smakanchanak, Gita, VI, 8) and is not concerned with human relations of friendship and enmity (mitra, dveshya) nor even spiritual merit and sin (sadhushvapicha papeshu, Gita, VI, 9). In fact, it is the possibility, the availability in nature of diverse and conflicting values, that renders evolution of all possible.

The process of evolution is known to divide activities into congenial and detrimental categories. Vairagya is the turning away from the latter kind, while abhyasa (habit, or practice) leads to the perpetuation of the movements helpful to the organism, be it the individual or communal. The increased complexity of structure and differentiation of function as envisaged in the Gita have also been adverted to. Those that would build a merely illusionist philosophy on the text are faced with these evolutionary implications, and the basic matter frequently driven to the surface does no violence to either of the apparently opposed fundamentals of mentalism (Idealism) and

Materialism. On the other hand avirodha is a composite position blending the *Sat* and the *Asat* (sadasatchaham, Arjuna.)

Of the millions of elements that enter into the ocean of the personality, only very few manage to float to the surface, and enter into the limited field of consciousness. Of the millions of the cells that are discharged, only very few impregnate the ova. Of the millions that

strive, a few achieve, and out of the millions, few do strive at all. Who may then explain how Shakespeare or the Buddha were born? Is it evolution or illusion? "Manushyanam sahasreshu kaschityatati siddhaye, yetatamapisid-dhamam Kaschimmam vathitatvatah (Gita VII, 3.)

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

THE MENACE OF CATHOLIC ACTION.

After the preliminary agitation that had been carried on by the Bishops to prepare their "flocks", the Joint Pastoral Letter of the Hierarchy of England and Wales on Catholic Action was issued in May of this year. This initiated the formation of a National Board of Catholic Action under the presidency of Cardinal Bourne. The declared aim of this body is:—

...to unite the Catholics of the country of every political shade of opinion and of every social grade, under the immediate direction of their own Ordinaries, in common action for the common cause of Catholic faith and morals

Or to use the comment of the Catholics Universe:—

...the scattered forces of the Catholic Church in England and Wales are now being mobilized into a well organized, efficient but pacific army.

This is neither the application of a new policy nor an unexpected event. It was already rumoured in September, 1932 in certain Catholic newspapers, that the Vatican had plans to co-ordinate Catholic

Action in England and other countries. It is, however, another step in the systematic advance of Catholicism in this country, the significance of which all who have the cause of intellectual liberty at heart would do well to consider.

The idea of Catholic Action sprang up in the time of Leo XIII., and the principles on which it is based are formulated in his important encyclicals—particularly the so-called "Workers' Charter" (1891) and "On Christian Democracy" (1901). It has been defined "authentically" by the present Pope Pius XI as "the participation and the collaboration of the laity with the Apostolic Hierarchy" in matters affecting the rights and vital interests of the Mother Church. Pius X., in explaining the reasons for Catholic Social Action in his encyclical on that subject (1905) truly remarks:—

The Church, throughout her long history, has always, and on every occasion, luminously shown that she possesses a wonderful power of adaptation to the varying conditions of civil

society;.....Always safeguarding her sacred rights, she easily bends and adapts herself in all that is contingent and accidental, to the vicissitudes of time, and the fresh needs of society.

In the modern age, when in many countries the Catholic Church lacks the political privilege and economic power (through land ownership) that it once possessed, it is dependent on the pressure which can be exerted on political parties or governments-eager for votes or afraid of popular revolt-through the masses it controls. It is only through its laity that the Church can exercise this power; for they can enter various organizations without meeting the same suspicion and distrust which the black robes of the priest are likely to arouse, and above all without committing the Church to the particular set of political or social views and aims which the organizations in question uphold.

It should be well known, at least to Freethinkers, how Catholics have penetrated every Parliamentary Party in this country, successfully removing any open antagonism to Catholicism, and even influencing them to forward Catholic claims, especially in regard to their schools. It is well to remember in this connection the words of Cardinal Bourne when he was interpreting the present Pope's encyclical "On the Social Order" for British Catholics:—

Happily we may safely say that there is no political party at the present time in England which definitely takes its stand on non-Christian principles..... Good, sincere Catholics have been Conservatives, or Liberals, or members of the Labour Party.

The Cardinal did not fail to add, in instructing the Catholic as to his attitude inside the party of his choice:—

When his religious faith and his conscience come into conflict with the claims of the party, he must obey his conscience and withstand the demands which his party may make upon him.

Apart from the Civil Service and the police, the Trade Unions and Co-operative Movement have been the particular prey of this Church, for it knows that if it is to capture the masses, it must direct particular attention towards the organizations of the working-class. The rapid formation of Catholic guilds inside most of the strongest trade unions has been one of the most important aspects of this policy in recent years.

The Catholic Directory lists more than fifty Catholic organizations of national import in this country, each appealing to certain special interests, but all furthering the common cause of Catholic advance. Following the example of countries like Italy and Czechoslovakia, the work of these organizations is now to be unified under central control.

The forerunner of the present National Board for Catholic Action has been the Catholic Confederation, of which the Westminster Federation, under the strict control of Cardinal Bourne, has been the most active section, particularly in recent years. In its journal the Catholic Federationist (January, 1927), an article appeared on "What the Federation has done", from which the following is taken:—

From 1906 to 1920 it has dealt with every Education Bill, from the Birrell Bill to the Fisher proposals: it has continually opposed Socialism, and

stood for the difference between Christian Democracy and Social Democracy ; it fought and defeated Secular Education in the Trades Union and Labour Movement, and Divorce in Co-operative Movement ; it has continually watched Catholic interests in the Press, Parliaments and Municipalities.....

In the Joint Pastoral Letter, the Hierarchy are at pains to emphasize in connection with the new National Board that "Catholic Action is above and beyond all politics whether national or international". For the Holy Father "has laid it down explicitly that abstention from every form of political activity is a fundamental law of this world-wide movement". Then follows this interesting statement:—

The guarantee of its spiritual character and aims is to be found in the Holy Father's statement that "Catholic Action is, and always will be, dependent upon the episcopate".

Now it is undoubtedly true that one of the most important principles of Catholic Action is that the Catholics in acting shall never be more than puppets of the priest. Already, in 1901, Leo XIII. formulated this idea in the following words:—

Finally, we again enjoin, and with greater insistence, that whatever schemes people take up in the popular cause, whether individually or in association, they must be entirely submissive to episcopal authority.

For, said Pious X., in 1905:—

..... it is proper..... and Catholics should submit, like docile, loving children, to this maternal vigilance.

But is the Church then incapable of directing political action ? When M. P's and potential M. P's were questioned as to their attitude towards Catholic schools in the 1929 elections, and their answers read out with appropriate comment in the Catholic Churches, when some of them were bombarded with threatening post cards at the time of the Scurr Amendment, was this "spiritual" and not "political" action because the Church controlled it ? If in the interest of plain speaking and clear thinking we put this word-play on one side, the most that can be said about previous Catholic Action in this country is that it has avoided definite alliance with any one political party. For tactical reasons, however, the advocacy of a Catholic party for England has been negated by the Church. Here is a representative statement of the reasons from the Christian Democrat (organ of the Catholic Social Guild) :—

Why not a Catholic Party ? We remember an objection stated by the Cardinal, that the party, like other parties, would make mistakes, and the Church would be held responsible. There is the further objection that we should set ourselves apart in isolation from our non-Catholic brethren, and so sacrifice those countless and important, if individually insignificant, opportunities of penetration, permeation and leadership which lie upon us as a duty of apostolate and Christian patriotism.

In Czechoslovakia, however to take the example of but one other country, a distinction is not even preserved between the Catholic Parties and Catholic Action, as the following extract from the constitution of Catholic Action there illustrates:—

Catholic Action is non-political.....; if however Parliament is occupied with questions which concern the Church or her clergy, Catholic Action also co-opts on to its councils the Parliamentary representatives of such parties as are professedly Catholic, and have included in their programme the settlement of Catholic claims.

If we consider the general aims of the new National Board as they are carefully formulated in the Pastoral Letter, it is clear that certain of them are only attainable through political means :—

Under ecclesiastical control and guidance Catholic action will be directed to watching the Press and broadcast utterances for misrepresentations with regard to Catholic faith and practice ; it will sedulously safeguard the interests of Catholic schools in the face of threatened inimical legislation ; it will defeat the principles of Catholic morality against the insidious propaganda of the new Paganism ; it will strive to secure for Catholics adequate representation on public bodies ; it will aim at co-ordinating and intensifying all the means hitherto employed to bring the knowledge of our Holy Faith to the minds of our fellow countrymen both by the spoken and written word !

As in the past, so in the future, only with a greater co-ordination of effort through the new National Board of Catholic Action, the Catholic Laity in each of the political parties will fight for further grants for ~~Non~~-Provided

Schools, will oppose more enlightened facilities for disseminating birth-control information, will seek a tightening-up of the Blasphemy Laws and so on.

The study of this, as of any aspect of Catholic Action, brings one inevitably to the conclusion that in matters of organization and tactics this Church, which manages to advance successfully a bad cause based on an out-worn superstition, is an object-lesson to us all in the Freethought Movement. The vigorous activity of many Catholics forms a striking and tragic contrast to the complacency and lethargy of many who lightly pledge their service to the cause Reason. It is true that we cannot secure unity and action on the basis of an obedience that results from fear, Can we not do so, however, as a consequence of our conviction of the truth and the nobility of our cause ? Let us take a concrete example. The average Catholic refuses to send his child to a non-Catholic school, without the consent of his Bishop, because he fears excommunication. Has the secularist not sufficient reason to withdraw his children from religious instruction at school, in the knowledge that such instruction is detrimental to the child's mind, and therefore, is a violence of its rights ? This is really but an elementary form of Secular Action. But how many Freethinkers have fulfilled this duty ?

ALLAN FLANDERS.

In the Freethinker.

BROTHERHOOD IN CHRISTIANITY.

As a result of English education, Indians who have not accepted the religion of the ruling power, have adopted the prevailing English phraseology to such an extent as to freely use such phrases as Christian fortitude, Christian charity, Christian resignation and Christian brotherhood. The Editor of a well-known Hindu magazine has just told the missionaries that Christianity is losing ground in the cultured sections of the East because of the failure on their part in adopting "Christian" methods. Educated Hindus have, in consequence of their Western education, a very high notion of Christianity and its methods. Let us see, as a test, how far Christianity has promoted brotherhood. The history of Europe disproves the contention that Christianity has made for peace. There is close inter-relation between peace and brotherhood. Jesus taught his disciples saying: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This no doubt implies brotherhood; but the question arises now, as it arose in his own time,—what meaning did Jesus himself attach to the term "neighbourhood"? His own answer to this question (Luke x, 29-37) was that it applied only to those who are our benefactors. The real attitude of Jesus towards this great question is explained also by his utterances and conduct as set forth in other parts of the New Testament. It is well known that in his magnificent mission of salvation he discriminated between man and man. He did not seek converts outside Israel and refused to give equal chance to all men. We are told in Luke: "The Son of Man has come to save men of the house of Abraham." Christ told his Jewish apostles: "Go not into the way of the

Gentiles, and every city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Addressing them he thus made the point further clear: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God: but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them." Professor F. C. Burkitt, D. D. has stated in "Jesus Christ, an Historical Outline," that Jesus himself is reported to have said, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs," and further that the oldest repetition of this story tells us quite distinctly that he had not been sent to outside nations but the Israelites. Here the founder of Christianity places non-Jews at a serious disadvantage. All the same, Missionaries coolly tell the heathen that Christ alone among the world's religious leaders not only taught the truth but electrified world by his example in living the truth which he taught. Can it be contended, from what has been said, that he set a noble example of truth? It must be conceded that he does not go in his teachings just quoted so far as Jehovah the God of the Jews who, in order to find excuse for inflicting dire punishment on the Egyptian King hardened that man's heart. But St. Paul, who has played so large a part in building up the Christian Church, has in Roman ix cited Jehovah's treatment of Pharaoh as a Christian precedent. Christ himself has given proof of his "sweet reasonableness" by cursing unbelievers and relegating them

to "everlasting fire." Moreover, the Bible assigns to the heathen a miserable position. In Psalm ii Jehovah tells his Son; "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession..... Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Colonel Seton (who has, on retirement from the Army entered Holy Orders and is now Vicar of Barley in Rutland) thus comments on this charming passage: "Surely that means the teeming millions of India, Africa, and the South Sea Islands, Burma etc., to whom we have taken good government and the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ," ("British-Israel, Fact or Fallacy? London: the Covenant Publishing Co., Ltd., 1918). Discrimination and not brotherhood stands out from the use by Jesus of such choice terms as "hypocrites," "like unto whited sepulchres", "serpents", "generation of vipers" to scribes and Pharisees. The Western nations find ample authority for regarding all heathen countries as their birth-right. The early Christians adopted the principle that "all the wealth of the heathen world belonged to the faithful." (Barbeyroe in "Traite de morale des Peres"). Pope Nicholas II (1058-61) declared that Jesus had conferred upon Peter the control (*jura*) of an earthly as well as of a heavenly empire; and this phrase was embodied in the canon law. Another Pope, at a later date, asserted that James, the brother of Jesus, left to Peter not only the government of the whole Church but that of the whole world (*totum seculum gubernandum*). Pope Gregory VII claimed the entire Earth as the property of the Holy See; and on the discovery of America and the East (India) the Popes

allotted to the Portuguese all lands to the eastward of Cape Nun on the African coast and to the Spaniards all lands to the West, the islands being regarded as the appanage of the Holy See. India was thus allotted to the Portuguese. The Christianity of Christ is well expressed in 2 Cor. VI where it is stated that there can be no friendly relations between believers and infidels. The Christian nations of the West have had no compunction in forcibly dispossessing the heathen aboriginals of their homes in East Africa and in relegating them to "Native reserves" which were of the least use to white settlers. But when it came to the granting of the franchise to Indians who had helped them in their exploits there was bitter opposition to the proposal from the white settlers. We have been told by the Rev. C. F. Andrews that the Bishop of Uganda had probably done most of all to set the British public against the Indians by his presentation of the case. The Bishop solemnly warned the government against any attempt to subject the Colony to a *condominium* of the Christian British and the heathen Indian settlers. Men of religion are naturally the foremost in carrying out the teachings of their religion. Sir Norman Angell writes in *The Fruits of Victory*: "Some of the worst crimes against justice have been due to the very fierceness of our passion for righteousness—a passion so fierce that it becomes indiscriminating and unseeing. It was the passion for what men believe to be religious truth which gave us the Inquisition and the religious wars." John Stuart Mill has thus dwelt on the effect of Christianity on its followers: "Armed with the prestige and filled with the scornful overbearingness of the conquering nation they have the feelings inspired by absolute power

without its sense of responsibility. They think the people of the country were dirt under their feet: it seems to them monstrous that any rights of the natives should stand in the way of their smallest pretensions: the simplest act of protection to the inhabitants against any act of power on their part which they may consider useful to their commercial objects, they denounce and sincerely regard as an injury." (Representative Government," Chap. xviii). The Rev. Dr. Thomas Arnold, D. D., the famous Headmaster of Rugby, has stated: "In a world made up of Christians and non-Christians the latter should have no rights." A writer stated in the Man-

chester Guardian Weekly" (May 6, 1927) that there is a "settled habit that assumes that the native exists for the benefit of the white man and has no rights where his interests conflict with those of his superior." Sir Alexandre Cardew has stated in the "Rationalist Annual" for 1934 that there was in the minds of good Christians such an almost *generic* difference between Christians and "the heathen" that no one dreamt of applying to the latter the principles which held good as regards the former. This has been pointed out by Lecky in his "History of Rationalism" Vol. II, page 333.

S. HALDAR

LIFE AFTER DEATH

It is usually preached in the Catholic church that there is a life beyond death. Scientifically speaking, this means that "*consciousness* will survive death." The idea that most people have about death is quite the same. That there is a "life after death" is the creed of each and every religion except Buddhism. Masons believe in the existence of the soul and Theosophists hold the opinion that we will reincarnate into a new physical body, and that our present ego may have belonged to some person who lived hundreds of years ago. The conception of a future life, it will be seen, differs according to the creeds and countries of a people. But they all believe in the existence of the soul and in immortality.

Though there are prominent philosophers who support the idea that when we die we will enjoy a new life, it is quite clear that their strange conception cannot, anyhow, have any

scientific basis, as we are but the outcome of human evolution and, as other animals, we will have to submit to nature's laws. The man's sum-total of flesh, nerves and blood, is all he is, and no immaterial substance can be found in him. The idea that we have a "spiritual" body is not logical, for if there is any non-material or spiritual substance in us we must think that this substance must have had its origin in our physical body, and that it will die with us, as must any intrinsic *force* of our body. Otherwise, we may ask: From where does this substance come, and when does it enter into our physical body?" It is not logical to believe that it is insufflated in our body soon after we are born. It is also inadmissible ^{to} that we are born with that immaterial ^{sub-} substance, as the material cannot pro-^{duce} the immaterial. (See Russell's *What* ^{and} *I believe*.) ^{material move}

It has been also said by many that the existence of the immaterial substance (soul) can be proved by our thought faculty. They say that it proves our spiritual environment. If, however, they could be able to perceive the weakness of their arguments to prove immortality, they would look at facts and see that the idea of immortality cannot resist any good logical argument. Consciousness depends on our physical body and cannot survive death as "in

order to continue knowing or doing anything, we must have a physical body". It is absurd to believe in such things as all proofs are against it. Death is the end of all life and it destroys all our faculties, and all our functions cease. It is the end of consciousness, and that "non-material" substance, the "life after death" and all such ridiculous things will never more torment our brain. It is the end of ALL,

R. S. FONTES.

Religion would cease to exist the moment it is admitted that death ends all. Priests must preach this with all the vehemence they are capable of, as their whole business is founded on this belief.

ED. REASON.

WITCHCRAFT RAMPANT IN ENGLAND.

Twenty Thousand People Practise Sorcery at a Profit.

Not long ago, says a writer in "John Bull" a Norfolk village was in turmoil because one of its housewives got a scalded foot. A day or two before she slammed her door in the face of a peddling sorcerer, who cursed her (so she said) and a few minutes afterwards a kettle boiled over on to her foot.

At Wolverhampton recently a man refused to give evidence in a court of law because the woman in the case was said to be a "witch."

A young London woman, with a small child, committed suicide a short while ago because another cheap necromancer had foretold a series of disasters to her.

One of them was that the woman's mother (aged nearly ninety, by the way) would die shortly: The mother did die, and the woman therefore assumed that the other disasters would follow.

This is the year of grace 1934, the third generation of compulsory education in this country; the age of the aeroplane, of wireless, of science, of the triumphs of man the reasoning animal, over the dark beliefs and inhibitions of his forebears.

The Last Witch.

The last "witch" was burned in England in 1784; some poor unfortunate old woman, no doubt. After that the law had had enough. It would no longer recognise a stupid belief by exercising its mighty machinery to suppress it. The law was repealed.

But, two centuries after, the belief in witchcraft persists in every part of the country. Every kind of bugaboo of superstition and idiot necromancy still prevails. Witches to-day, however, own rows of houses and have substantial balances in the bank.

Therein lies John Bull's chief interest in the matter. The gullible are presumably born with their credulity and cannot be blamed for it any more than a person with a physical deformity. There is a deformity which they can only cure themselves.

Exploitation.

But the exploitation of it is a different thing. It has been estimated by the police that about 20,000 people are now practising sorcery in all its various forms in this country, and practising to ample profit.

At Beverley, Yorkshire, recently, a woman sent to prison for fraud, sold a "love potion" called "Zep" prepared from "an animal bred in the East," at prices ranging from £25 to £75 a bottle.

It was shown in evidence that she had succeeded in the getting over £400 from several women in a very short space of time.

We have mentioned the case of the Wolverhampton man who refused to give evidence in Court because the woman concerned was a "witch." In those same hard-headed Midlands, the place where motor-cars and machinery are made, there is a roaring trade done in love philtres.

In South Staffordshire, and in the heart of Warwickshire, there are modern sorcerers masquerading as herbalist and "psycho-analysts," who have a wholesale turnover in other forms of "mumbo-jumbo."

For 7s. 6d., 10s. 5d., and a guinea you can buy gruesome natural preparations to ensure good luck, prevent yourself being "overlooked" or ward off every imaginable complaint from rheumatism to the "king's evil."

Dragon's Blood.

Dove's heart dust, bat's wings, goat's tongues ("killed when Jupiter is in the ascendant") and other offals are merely a few of the magic substances sold at the price of half a week's wages to the credulous.

"Dragon's blood," used by the ton by photographic block makers and by the paint trade, is sold in small bottles at 5s. each to country people in Cornwall, South Wales and Norfolk.

A small quantity of it smeared over the door lintel is supposed to keep erring husbands at home, and to attract a lover for the daughter of the house.

The Black Country seems to be truly named. A Staffordshire husband recently appeared in the police court on an assault summons. His wife had paid 10s. for a recipe for "love drops," which are wildly sold to credulous women, who are told that by administering them they can keep their husband's affection.

The husband told the court that he caught his wife pouring something out of a blue bottle into his tea. He demanded to know what it was, and when she told him he took off his belt and started to use it. The sequel to those "love drops" was an assault summons.

The same country is, appropriately enough, the chief source of supply for the deluge of amulets, lucky charms and other gadgets which are now pouring out as fast as the mills and metal presses of Birmingham can turn them out.

A Chamber of Commerce official recently estimated that nearly a £1,000,000 worth of them are being sold annually at all prices ranging from sixpence to jewelled signs of the Zodaic and cabalistic symbols costing pounds.

It is an ironic commentary on this that in a dozen "found drowned" inquests lately, lucky charms were specifically mentioned as being found on the dead person.

Superstition Kept Alive.

People who ought to know better help to keep superstitious practices alive and make hay for the sorcerers. A few weeks ago Gloucester Council, sitting in all solemnity, decided that the miniature horseshoes which form the mayoral chain should be altered so that the points hung downwards—their traditional position. The last mayor had them turned round with the points upwards so that the city's luck would not run out of the shoes."

And then there are the widely quoted visits of Society leaders and politicians to the various necromancers who flourish in Mayfair and the West End of London on five-figure incomes.

They have their counterparts in the hordes of cheaper sorcerers who prey upon the credulous in all parts of the country,

There is no need to mince words about this modern witchcraft. It is as much a fraud and theft as three-card trick.

There is abundant proof of its more more margin aspects. There have been half a dozen suicides during the past year by people bedazed and hypnotised by the gloomy prophecies or some of these pernicious soothsayers.

And there are plenty of places, particularly in rural areas, where the local sorcerer practically bosses the community to his or her ample profit, and to the harm of the inhabitants. Many country doctors can confirm from their experience cases like that of a Dorset woman who recently took a dying child to the local "witch" rather than to the doctor.

There is plenty of evidence to make the authorities bestir themselves and amend the law. To compel policemen's wives to act as "agents provocateur" so that an occasional crystal gazer can be haled into court and fined, is not enough.

This modern witchcraft has now become a profitable and a dangerous racket in this country, and it should be stamped out ruthlessly. Let the sorcerers try their magic on prison bars.

[It is not in England alone that many people still believe in witch-craft, sorcery and other occult absurdities. They are so all over Europe and America. Faulty education or the lack of it is responsible for this. In Schools and Churches they learn from childhood of miracles, of the power of charms and amulets and the baneful effects of curses and so forth. Is there any wonder that such people will continue to believe in such kind of superstitions whether performed by priests, witch doctors or sorcerers?]

ED. REASON]

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

"TO COMBAT ALL RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS THAT CANNOT STAND THE TEST OF REASON AND TO ENDEAVOUR TO CREATE A SCIENTIFIC AND TOLERANT MENTALITY AMONG THE MASSES OF THIS COUNTRY." *"Objects of the Rationalist Association of India."*

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Notice.—All contributions must be addressed to the Editor "Reason," c/o The Rationalist Association of India, Empire Automobile Building, Queen's Road Bombay 4. For further information write to the Hony. Secretaries, Rationalist Association of India.

NOTES AND HAPPENINGS

"Tambourine in one hand and gas bomb in the other" is the way U. S. Senator Bone describes the activities of a Missionary in Ecuador, who sold munitions in conjunction with his reforming duties. The phrase, says the Montreal Gazette, recalls the witty remark of the late Max O'Rell, who said

that the English did their civilizing work in the Dark Continent with the Bible and a bottle of gin. The English appear to believe a good deal in the civilizing influence of these Missionaries. Although the activities of Missionaries in India are very great, the net result of their work, so far, is very

meagre. From the point of view of conversion, it may be said to be negligible. In times of famine, a few thousands are converted here and there, and this fact has led one cynic to remark that these converts were "Bread and Butter Christians." These Missionaries, in order to attract would-be converts, depend a good deal on the medical relief they can afford to give to the people in remote districts. This, with their schools, absorbs a good deal of their activities.

* * *

Our late Viceroy, Lord Irwin, now Lord Halifax, appears to think that only these missionaries will succeed in civilizing India. At any rate, he is reported to have recently said in England that the salvation of India depended on Christianity and unstinted support must be given to them. This, perhaps, explains why the officials here have always such a soft corner for these Missionaries, whatever may be their denominations. If their schools are visited, one hears nothing but eulogies of their methods and efforts. One must certainly admit that were it not for the Missionaries the people of India would have been still without schools and colleges, except in the big cities where the Government have provided some. Take the case of a city like Bombay. Here, education is mostly provided by the Jesuits and R. C. nuns, while the Missionaries of the Protestant sects have also numerous schools, colleges and so forth. Dr. Paranjpye, in his book, "The Crux of the Indian Problem", has well described the nature of education in India and the disadvantages of teaching in such a country as India.

* * *

That mysticism often causes madness is, of course, well known. The following

sad case taken from "Le Journal" of Paris of the 3rd November last is very interesting.

"On the 2nd of November last, a well-dressed man of respectable appearance, aged about 44 years, presented himself before the priest of the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris and declared to him that he had just killed his mother because she was Satan, himself, under the guise of his mother. Not believing what he said, since he knew him to be a country man who belongs to a good and respectable family, the priest, all the same, took him to the nearest police station where the Russian, (for he was one) made the following statement:—

"My mother was a Lutheran and I recently got converted to the Orthodox religion, which is the only true one. For a long time now, I am struggling against Satan, who has assumed the shape of my mother. Since then, we have only had one idea, and that was to kill my mother who is Satan. Last night, at about 4 a.m. I got up. God, then, commanded me to kill the enemy. I could not back out of this divine command. At that moment my mother ceased to be my mother, but she became truly the evil one whom it was necessary for me to destroy. I threw her down and strangled her till she died. She struggled and scratched me, but I prayed to God to give me the strength and I choked her to death. Replying to the Commissioner who asked him if he did not regret having done such an act, he said; "No, I have done my duty, you can do what you like with me."

* * *

The Police immediately went to the place where the Russian said he lived, and true enough, they found that he had strangled his mother who was already cold.

After a little while, a pastor of the Lutheran Church in Paris, came to the police station and made the following declaration:—

“I have known De Brix (the name of the Russian) long before his conversion to the Orthodox faith. He belongs to a good and respectable family. He and his mother were refugees from Russia to Paris during the Russian Revolution. His father was a Colonel in the Imperial Army. Many times De Brix has asked for my advice in his religious difficulties, and I found that his mind was rather deranged. Eight days ago, I saw him when he told me, in a very mysterious manner, that he had received a very important communication from St. Theresa of Lizieux (also known as the Little Flower of Jesus).”

A neighbour of the Russian also made a statement to the effect that of late he had appeared deranged in mind and used to talk incoherently mixing up Satan in his conversation.

* * *

When one thinks that the Christian religion is nothing else but the teaching how man is constantly agitated by the Devil and what he must do to escape his snares, he wonders that there are not more cases of insanity among staunch believers in that religion. Some denominations of religion picture the wrath of God, and the malice of the Devil in such lurid and awful fashion that despair must fill the minds of many in their helplessness to escape the anger of one and the machinations of the other. It is really fortunate that very few, indeed, even among staunch believers dwell constantly on these gloomy features of their religion. Christianity is the only

religion that has surrounded death with all the terrors one can possibly imagine.

* * *

Our readers must have read with surprise the wicked and malicious attacks in the Times of India by two individuals on this Journal and our Association.—While the Times of India, by publishing such baseless and cowardly allegations against us, undoubtedly showed its bias and prejudice against Rationalism, we must express our thanks to the Bombay Sentinel and the Bombay Chronicle who allowed us the use of their columns to expose thoroughly the nature of these attacks and the motives that prompted them. Bombay is really fortunate in possessing two such papers as the Bombay Sentinel and the Bombay Chronicle which are fast becoming the most popular papers of the Western Presidency. They deserve their success on account of their impartiality and fearlessness.

* * *

Like many others, General Smuts sees grave and immediate danger in the political situation of Europe.—Speaking recently at the St. Andrews University in Scotland, he said that he was not so afraid of the possibility of another great war as he was of the decline in individual freedom in many European countries including England. “I fear this new tyranny more than I fear the danger of another great war. Even in this island home of constitutional freedom I do not know that you are immune. Democracy seems to be going out of favour and unless its methods can be overhauled, its unpopularity may involve the cause of liberty itself.” There is no use denying the fact that the tendency all over is for autocracy. We are on the tide of reaction and no mistake

about it. Who can say that this is not one of the baneful effects of the last disastrous war? I think that they are again working feverishly for another. Our civilization is really surface deep and there is yet too much of the cave-man in most of us. Who was it who recently said:—"After two thousand years of Christianity we are still at the Mass and the poison gas? Yet thousands of pulpits all over the world assure us that Christ came to save mankind. Save it from what?"

* * *

A French aeroplane recently met with disaster in Africa and it is believed that it fell in a village in Portuguese West Africa and that the two pilots were eaten by cannibals who still exist in those places. The Portuguese authorities, it would appear, showed their unwillingness to help in the investigation of this disaster and even the French authorities in Africa, from where the aeroplane started, did not appear very keen on investigating the disaster thoroughly. The wife of one of the pilots, however, organized a party and made a thorough search and succeeded in locating the place of the disaster. It was only then that the Portuguese authorities made up their mind to go through the matter properly. From the first they showed their inclination to use violent methods with the natives to find out what had become of the plane and the pilots. Some of the natives, after great difficulties, confessed that one Alfredo, a converted native to Roman Catholicism, who was dreaded as a great sorcerer in the village, had, with his friends, eaten the two pilots and buried the plane in the sands. He had, it is stated, threatened the blacks with the greatest punishment, through sorcery, if they divulged the secret. When appre-

hended, Alfredo refused to talk as did his confederates. The Portuguese then applied their methods to make them talk. We will let Monsieur Didier Poulain, the special representative of *Le Journal* sent to Portuguese West Africa to further investigate the matter, speak:—"On the outskirts of the village of Susanoh a great scene was enacted. Yells and howlings were incessant, blood flowed and blows from the "palmatore" punctuated the answers of the blacks who were questioned. What is the "palmatore"? Well, it is a club, very much like the wooden mallet of a washer-woman. Holes are bored through it which act like suckers when it strikes the flesh. About the tenth stroke the skin bursts and the flesh is torn. From that moment, the torture becomes unbearable. If this is not enough, there remains "le carcan a crane" which I call thus from ignorance of its true name. It consists of two pieces of bamboo placed on either side of the head and they are progressively tightened by means of a piece of rope. When these methods were applied the natives made up their minds to speak."

* * *

It transpired that the villagers confessed that the aeroplane fell in their village and that Alfredo dispatched the pilots and ate them with his friends. As Alfredo would not confess completely, in spite of the torture, he was hanged to the nearest tree. Mme. Gate, wife of one of the pilots, implored the Portuguese authorities not to use cruel means to extract confession. To which she was replied by the Portuguese authorities:—"Madame, laissez nous mener l'enquete comme nous l'entendous. Nous ne reculerons devant rien pour savoir la verite". She especially begged for the life of an old villager who was not

only weak and old, but also one-sighted; but the poor fellow was hanged without ceremony. Then followed a general massacre in which many natives were exterminated and their village burnt down.

* * *

The methods of the Inquisition in the twentieth century! Who would say that we are civilized? We are still cave men and we show it at the slightest provocation. To think that even *Le Journal* does not altogether condemn this savage procedure to extract confession is remarkable for it says:—"Ces procedes sont barbares et cruels, mais il faut

reconnaitre qu'avec les sauvages aussi primitifs, les methods europeennes resteraient sans effet. Et n'oubliez pas que siles Portugais y font appel. a regret, tres certainement—c'est pour retrouver l'equipage d'un avion francais". It is pleasing for us to note that the English would never resort to such extreme methods in trying to extract confession from even such primitive people.

* * *

Our best congratulations to our President, Dr. Deshmukh, in his great triumph and victory in the last election in Bombay for the Legislative Assembly.

THE TRUTH OF EVOLUTION

Sir Arthur Keith some years ago reminded us in his Presidential address of the British Scientific Association, the proofs of the truth of Evolution have become so overwhelming that only a blind idiot would refuse to recognize them. There were many such fools in the world as recently as twenty years ago, and, as we are now, there are millions among the so-called educated who have not the slightest idea what Evolution really means. All they have heard about that word is something that makes them laugh, namely, that a certain person named Darwin was stupid enough to say that once upon a time monkeys became men. They have heard the story from their priests and parsons who could not control their laughter when they told them to what length some scientists would go in their attempt to dethrone

God and ridicule religion. In some countries like Tennessee in America, these ignorant bigots have actually succeeded in preventing the teaching of Evolution, and the Roman Catholic Church, which commands the adherence of millions of people, continues to teach the story of Creation, according to the Jewish Bible! Though it does not dare contradict openly the teaching of science on the subject, it privately insinuates that Evolution is not true. Pius the Ninth, in his famous *Quanta Cura*, actually condemned the teaching of modern science and pronounced an anathema on those who do not believe that man was created by a Personal God out of dust and woman was formed out of one of his ribs! Well, we will let the Catholic and the Fundamentalist believe what they like, but one is

pleased to note that among earnest seekers after Truth the truth of Evolution is being generally recognized.

It must, however, be recognized that among many of these there is still a strong desire to placate religion by suggesting that God chose the method of Evolution to create the world and its living beings and that the process of Evolution bears unmistakable evidence of the orderly progress which could have only emanated from the Divine Mind.

Such an attempt is made by twenty-four scientists in a book "Creation by Evolution," edited by Francis Mason (Duckworth & Co., London). It is claimed that the author of each paper has chosen the evidence for evolution from facts with which he is in intimate touch and to the elucidation of which he himself has contributed very largely. The reviewer of that book, in "The Hindu" of the 8th November last, seem to have been so impressed with the array of scientists who have discovered the finger of God in the evolutionary process, that he cannot help expressing his admiration thus;—"That so many biologists", he says, "should agree on the basis of evidence at their disposal that there has been orderly progress from the dawn of life is in itself conclusive evidence to prove that there has been creation by evolution." The special creation idea of theologians is made to look grander because "Is not creation by evolution a far more exalted conception than any creation by fiat imagined of old"? And does it not reveal a God hand infinitely worthy of obedience and adoration"? Like our Brahmin friend, we must exclaim Wah? Wah!! to this. It is only a strong desire to coquette with religion that can make some men of science (not all eminent biologists in

the list of contributors of that book) to find "a God hand infinitely worthy of obedience and adoration" in this creation of evolution as they call the series of changes that have taken place on this planet, both in the inorganic and organic worlds.

When one remembers that it has taken Nature (blind nature at work) millions and millions of years to turn the simplex into the complex after repeated failures and enormous waste of life as paleontological records clearly show, one must conclude that Nature has tried her clumsy hands at it after inconceivable ages and countless failures to produce Man, the highest product of evolution so far. Can one discover any orderly progress in the creation and the extinction of such monsters as the dinosaurs, the brontosaurus, the megalosaurus; in fact, all the horrors of the reptilian age and other clumsy creatures that have mercifully been extinct? If a God hand, infinitely worth of obedience and adoration was really responsible for these colossal blunders and failures, one must say that it took him millions and millions of years to discover his failures, to try again for millions of years, fail again and so on, until the present forms of life have been perfected. And are they perfected? Can one explain any divine wisdom in turning a mammalian like the whale into an aquatic animal with vestigial limbs? Or the reason why such a monster like the crocodile should have survived its horrible contemporaries which perished millions of years ago? Imagine the hippotamus, the rhinoceros, the elephant, the python, and other clumsy and curious creatures to have been created by a being who aimed at order and progress in his mighty work! The whole idea when one

thinks of it is absurd in the extreme. On the contrary, it makes the Godhead ridiculous in the eyes of scientific and thoughtful men for they must naturally ask :—" Was it necessary for a Wise and Omnipotent being to take millions and millions of years to do what, with intelligence and foresight, he could have accomplished in the twinkle of an eye?" With the rest of the review of that book by "The Hindu" we are in cordial agreement. It is quite true that "the vast amount of biological knowledge, anatomical, embryological, palaeontological, geographical and physiological, accumulated by patient research during the last fifty years can only be explained on the basis of evolution.

It is only evolution that can explain the meaning of the general similarity of plan which exists among the vertebrates both in regard to external morphology and internal structure.

It is only evolution that can explain the occurrence of vestigial organs such as the claws at the sides of the vent of the python, the reduced wings of the Kiwi, the femur of a whale, the ear muscles, and the vermiform appendix in man, and so many other vestigial organs too numerous to mention here.

It is only evolution that can explain why animals during their individual development show evidence of the racial history through which their ancestors have passed. Why, for instance, the tadpole resembles a fish; why a lizard or a chick, when developing inside the egg, shows gill slits? Why at a certain stage of development the embryo of a pig, dog, or monkey, cannot be differentiated from one another, and why that of man also, at a very early stage of development, resembles that of any of the animals just

mentioned. It is quite true, as the reviewer says, that the theory of Special Creation is helpless in the face of such facts as these.

A student of paleontology who would remain unconvinced before the facts revealed by that science as to the series of life forms, both in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, which have succeeded one after the other, must be regarded as a peculiarly unintelligent individual indeed. He would be at a loss to explain the pedigree of the horse or elephant, to mention only two animals, the life forms of whose ancestors are so faithfully recorded in the rocks.

When we come to the evidence of the evolution of man, we cannot but be struck by the fact that it took at least two millions of years for the fully developed *homo* of today to have evolved from a lowly ancestor in Tertiary Period. Various "missing links" recently discovered show how slowly this evolution has been and how suggestive it is that natural selection and doubtless some other factors, slowly picked out man as a creature with a better developed brain to go on improving him until he emerges as the creature we know him today. Is there anything in this natural process to suggest that a God, whatever is understood by that word, watched for millions of years from the moment the tiny unicellular organism was formed till civilized man appeared on the scene? Unless we identify this "God" with Nature itself, it is almost ridiculous to say as H. H. Newman says that "Evolution no more takes God out of the universe than does gravitation." They indicate the methods used by the ruling power back of the universe. The Theory of Evolution, as has been said, does not deny creation; it merely explains the method of creation."

The candid and well-informed man, who has no desire to placate religious sentiment, or who is not himself a mystic, will answer "Bosh" to this statement. "The ruling power at the back of the universe"! What is that and what is it like? Is it an impersonal power, in other

words, the forces of nature or the full-bearded Jehovah who has managed to get behind the scene of things to guide with his fingers the development of living beings. The very idea is absurd.

C. L. D'AVOINE.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA ON THE RELATIVITY OF ETHICAL VALUES.

Moral agency rests upon freedom. An individual or society that has no choice is incapable of action that may be properly named conduct. It is no doubt impossible to remain totally inactive even for a minute.

Nahi kaschit kshanamapi jatu
thisthatyakarmakrit
Karyateh yavasah karma sarvah
prakritijairgunaih. (Gita, III, 5)

(None can remain really actionless even for a moment. For, helplessly is everyone driven to action by the qualities of nature.)

An act which cannot be helped does not afford basis for judgment. As with individuals, so with regard to communities and nations, ethical value attaches to such actions only as are the result of free choice. A downtrodden community that reacts to the spur of pricking iniquity has no moral responsibility more than the horse that chafes under an irritating saddle. The kick is but an impulse stimulated by sore skin. It is even a virtual deception to attribute agency for deeds.

Prakriteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani
sarvasah

Ahamkara vimudhatma kartaham iti
manyate. (Gita, III, 27)

(Deeds are the outcome of the qualities of nature. The fool deluded by egoism thinks "I am the doer.")

The ways of nature are inexorable, human wisdom notwithstanding. It is futile to think of overriding its dictates. How we act, feel and think is determined by the setting into which we have been carried by the current of evolution.

Sadrisam cheshtate svasyah prakritim
gnanavanapi,
Prakritim yanti bhutani nighah kim
karishyati (Gita, III, 33.)

(Even the wise man behaves in conformity with his own nature; all beings follow their evolution, and restraint avails not.)

An effort to stem the tide of natural processes is not merely doomed to failure, but is often fraught with danger. The path of reform is none too smooth. Very few indeed may detach themselves from their environmental trappings, and overcome the fear involved in breaking away from the familiar ground of Swadharma.

Sreyan swadharma vigunah paradharmat
swanushtithat

Swadharma nidhanam sreyah para
dharmo bhayavahah (Gita, III, 35.)

(One's own natural action though devoid of merit, is to be preferred to the duty of another well performed. Even death in one's duty is higher. Another's duty is fraught with fear.)

This is the confirmation of the path of action relatively to one's own position. These that would sustain the conservative ground on the basis of pronouncements in the Gita must be prepared when the Song declares that such attachment is itself the outcome of Moha or illusion. Elsewhere in diverse contexts, the discourse turns upon the cutting off of the conventional relationships. (Cf. *Asang sastrena drudhena chitva*, cutting down by the weapon of non-attachment, XV, 3).

The tendency to identify oneself with events is condemned in unmistakable terms, and the spirit of Yoga, the capacity to retain the detached view of life, the life of mere Sakshi (disinterested witness) sitting indifferently (*udasinavad asina*) is enjoined. It is claimed that such an effort at Yoga will result, even if faintly commenced, in emancipation from great fear. (*Swalpamapyasya dharma-sya trayate mahato bhayat*, II, 40). In the face of the dynamic activity that the Gita ordains, it will be futile to seek support in its teachings for the reactionary position which the stabilising sociologists wish to maintain. These that would chain human action for ever in the illusory faith that the final word was already said, the final deed was already done, and the final shapes was already given to human society forget the fundamental truth regarding life, viz., the central doctrine of the relativity of human values.

In an article "Coloured Vision" by Prof. H. Levy of the London University

(see R. P. A. Annual, 1934, pp. 21-26) the tendency to leave out of account the most important element, the creative man, from the consideration of the world's economic, scientific, political, and social problems is brought out. Even while philosophising, man tends to isolate his concepts, as much as the chemist would isolate the phenomena of his experiment in the laboratory. "One of the consequences of the stratification of the society he builds up is to provide the unsuspecting victim who is born in it and bred in these classes with sets of values, dogmas, and interlocking forms of behaviour. While out of these he may erect a set of principles signifying something fixed and permanent to him, for which if necessary he will fight or accept martyrdom they are effectively rationalisations with a class and individual colouring. Of absolutes there are none in nature, other than the fact of existence of objective nature itself. Our pictures of the world are only approximate, their accuracy being relative to the state of scientific knowledge of the times. Our values again are certainly relative, borrowing the tints from the social strata from which we are drawn, and from those features of the world, that have specially stirred us in our encounter with them." (Ibid, p. 25). This tendency towards overstressed abstraction is responsible for the confusion at the basis of all calculation. The reflective account given by Prof. Levy brings to mind the peculiar fallacy attributed to the disciples of a philosopher, named Paramanandayya. They were nine in number, but when the revered guru (master) wanted each one to count them all, each would give out the number as eight, forgetting himself. It is the fallacy of the forgotten self. "Even Science that prides itself

on the fact that it stands above race, class and creed, is not immune from this relativity of values." It strips all human values, from the world, leaving man completely out of its calculations. The industrialist condemns science that carries on as if he did not exist. It discovers new methods of production, too fast to cope with. The very machinery becomes obsolete during erection. "What has science done for us," chimes in the worker, "except give us rationalisation, and with it unemployment so that we are robbed of the very fruits it offers us." (ibid, p. 26).

While science ignores man and ignores society, philosophy loses itself in the speculation of the problems of the mind separated from matter. The worker and the industrialist change the face of the earth and create forms of society. He who is able to realise the relativity of these values is one who has thrown away the coloured spectacles.

Adhyatma gnana nityatam tatva
gnanardha darsanam
Etat gnanam iti proktam agnamam
yadatoanyadha (Gita, XIII, 12)

(Constancy in the knowledge of the real nature of the self, the realisation of the true essence, that is wisdom. All else is ignorance.)

The recognition of the fact that experiments carried on under laboratory conditions convey imperfect truth, that codes of morals formulated under conditions widely differing from our own

have to be accepted with caution, that the so-called "permanent and fundamental principles" are "unconsciously rationalised from the particular society within which we have been cradled," is the true beginning of emancipation through knowledge, the Moksha attained by Gnana. He who has realised this relativity is the seer, who looks beyond the temporalities of life. Having reached the ideal, no hankering is left in him after fresh pursuits, whatever his mode of life.

Ya enam veti purusham prakritimcha
gunaissaha
Sarvatha vartamanopi nasa bhuyopi
jayate (XIII, 24)

(He who thus knoweth life, with the limitations inherent in its settings whatever be his condition, has nothing left to return for.)

To be aware of the relativity of values is in itself emancipation from their supremacy. The Gita stands for Dvandva among the Samasas. (X, 33) "the duality of a compound." It can bridge the paradox between yes and no with a conjunction. The recognition of the relativity of human values is thus the attainment of absolute truth, the whole truth and nothing but truth. The wise man is not affected by the transformations occurring to individuals and societies in their limited histories. (Dheerastatra na muhyati,—the steadfast one grieveth not, II, 13.)

M. V. V. K. RANGACHARI.

BEHIND THE INDIAN VEIL

MODERN DEIFICATION

(BY AN INDIAN.)

The agnostic philosopher has well said that if, according to the Scripture, God made man in his own image, man has retaliated and made God in his own image. Again, was it not Ovid who first said, and his words have since been copied by and even attributed to more recent writers, that if the gods did not exist we should have to invent them? In this country, this process of god-making has been going on at a furious rate since time immemorial. But since the advent of British rule, with its new ideas of science and logic and reason, people had for some time begun to think that the process had at last ended, and perhaps that even the science of god-making had become lost like that of mummification or staining glass. But no! if we read recent events aright, the process is again becoming very common. May be there is a sub-conscious feeling in the air that a large demand is likely to arise soon. Our forefathers had, as they thought, made fair provision for all eventualities by having once for all created thirty-three crores. But the last census shows that the population of India is fast approaching this figure and in all probability the Census of 1941 will disclose the awful spectacle of some Indians being left without one all to themselves. The figure that our ancestors had thought was so large as to be beyond the dreams of avarice is on the point of being exceeded even as many others only seen in the wildest flights of imagination a hundred years ago are being daily surpassed at the present moment. We propose to describe

to the uninitiated some of the ways of modern god-making and enable them to guess the principal centres of their manufacture.

New "Raw Material"

In olden days god-making was the same as idol making and the only essential was a peice of metal or a stone of any kind and a hammer and chisel. Sometimes even this was unnecessary and any stone lying about immediately became a god if you put red powder and oil on it. At one time people suspected that Government was taking a great share in this manufacture by putting stones with red paint to mark the road boundaries in the country; but when ignorant people were discovered doing *pūja* to these stones, the colour of these stones was changed to white which are now so many white Rao Bahadurs (R. B. Road Boundary). But even in the case of idols, many strokes of the hammer were required before perfect godship was attained and many a time have the saintly Maratha poets eloquently pointed out the moral that just as hammerstrokes are required before attaining godship, so great suffering and sacrifice have to be borne by frail man before he attains the supreme happiness of communion with the Creator. In these days however, the raw material for gods is a human being, it does not matter whether it a boy, a man, or a woman. A girl has not to our knowledge yet been utilised to this purpose in this country, apparently because many a girl has since the

creation of the world enjoyed devotion at the hands of others though this devotion is of a different kind from the one we are speaking about and there may be some risk of confusion.

The Complete Process.

There is no one patent process for this deification. You may take a boy and say that in his fifty-third previous birth he was a king to whom worship was done by the painted Indians of Mexico. You can then give the history of all his successive incarnations; in one other birth he in the form of an earthworm happened to have been unwittingly trodden upon by Lord Buddha, who greatly grieved over the accident and blessed him; in another he was Christ himself; in a third Joan of Arc, in a fourth he was a pumpkin which Guru Nanak ate when he was very hungry, and so on. Fortunately even the British Museum or the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris contains no records or references to these past births and you are not likely to be challenged as to the truth of your statements if you swear hard to their truth and pretend to have revelations in your dreams. If you make and keep a sufficiently serious countenance, nobody will think of the insult offered to the memory of the great persons with whom you associate your budding God. Then the best thing to be done is to send him to a European university. The efficacy of Oxford in this respect has been recently discovered and we have recently seen an advance proof copy of a hustling advertisement of that seat of learning in which in addition to its usual claim as the home of lost causes she claims to be the "Institute of Instructing Incarnations." The inevitable Satan in the guise of a father or some near relative will soon appear and the

invention of a suitable name and perhaps the publication of a book in the name of the master will complete the process.

Other Methods.

Another way is to start as a very religious person, then pass through the whole gamut of religious sects, turn an atheist for a time, because the disciples of I. Q. C. get to know—or, what is quite as good, say that you have known—sages in the inaccessible heights of the Himalayas—N. B. This part of the prescription cannot long be executed after the labours of the Bullock-Workmans and others in the exploration of these mountains—and at last attain to the headship of your own sect with the help of visions of these sages. In this process you will probably shed a few followers, but that does not matter as those that are left are intended to complete the process of your deification. A Satan will arise in this case who will only publish far and wide this fact of your deification and lo! there you are, a full fledged "one of the greatest rulers of gods and men."

English blood or at least education in England are not absolutely necessary. On a hill near the town of Ardhaw we heard of a new god in the making some time ago, but our latest information is that the process was spoiled in the middle. This would-be god started brilliantly; after experiencing the state of atheism, which did not pay, he assumed a very humble name, fell at the feet of everybody, begged for a day or two his own food—in a few days this work was done for him by his pupils—dedicated temples to himself or ostensibly to his master and then began to prophesy and also recount the happenings in the past births of several people. But when he thought, good easy man! that full surely

his godship was a ripening, he met one who was his wife in a past existence. Having once studied law, the effect of which had not quite passed, he tried to apply the doctrine of priority. But his disciples had not yet seen their wives of their past existences and therefore took offence at this good luck of their master and spoiled what should have been a fine specimen of a god.

Others in the Making.

At the little village of Idris in the villayet of Kisan—from the name it ought to be in Turkey or Russia—there is another god almost ready. He does not go about dedicating temples. Temples are built for him where he stays. He does not prophesy in every intelligible words but his inner disciples interpret these for him. His general disciples feel great peace of mind in his presence, but so far as we know a Satan has not yet

appeared. In fact he is comparatively harmless even to those who are not his disciples. His one characteristic is to ask money of all visitors, but of course you need not visit if you don't want to pay. He never shouts his godship from the housetops. But we shall only warn his disciples not to pitch his claim too high, as a reaction may follow.

There are many other gods in the making in various places. The unbelieving public will say that they have feet and even bodies made very much of clay. But what god ever was without his detractors? But even the relics on the plate of his half-eaten dinner or his spittle which the uninitiated will think too nasty for words is regarded by his followers as nectar fit to be stored up for their descendants. Who knows whether our grand-children will not find miracles worked by these holy relics?

HYPOCRISY RAMPANT

Truth stands no chance in a world full of shams. Honesty is theoretically recognized as a virtue, but if you try to put it into practice, you will soon find it is a prohibited virtue. Hypocrisy is the order of the day. Honesty is supposed to be good for children, so we invent lies in order to impress the value of truth upon them. The story of George Washington refusing to tell a lie and the one about Napoleon striking medals in advance to commemorate his anticipated victory over England, are well-known lies invented for the benefit of children. The copy-book maxim about honesty

being the best policy does not sufficiently strike the imagination, so we must invent stories that will. Honest teachers may, indeed, go so far as to put undue emphasis on the word "policy" and point out that honesty is not considered desirable for its own sake, but only as a **policy**. Of course it does not take long to find out that it is not even the best 'policy' and that one may get into extremely hot water by putting it to the test.

In politics, of course, it is admitted on all hands that honesty is unthinkable. Powerful nations have to find plausible excuses for harassing and, if possible,

swallowing smaller nations, and where would they be if they had to be honest? That would spell the end of imperialism! How could they then pretend that they have a mandate from an obliging Almighty himself to govern as much of the earth as possible for its own good? In countries like India, which are for the moment concerned about their own independence—I hope this is not sedition—politicians with any ambition have to pretend that they agree or differ from Gandhi or the Government as happens to suit their particular purpose, and change their views as often as may be required by the exigencies of the situation, and in any case pretend to be honest all the time if they can manage it. Genuine honesty in politics is prohibited by law in all countries. In a recent sedition case, the judge openly declared that it was no defence to prove that certain allegations against Government were true, because even true statements may excite disaffection and thus be seditious. Then there is the Official Secrets Act. Most governments rely on lying and spying and treachery in addition to brute force and not only have spies in other countries, friendly or inimical, but assume the right to open the private letters of their own subjects, being perpetually afraid of political plots. Acts that would be considered extremely mean on the part of a private individual are a part of the current politics of almost every country, just as the murder of a person who has harmed you is a horrible thing, but it is extremely heroic to murder on a large scale persons who have done absolutely nothing to you, and you get war medals for doing it.

Law courts are supposed to administer justice and it is a pardonable error to think that justice has some connection

with truth. In practice, however, it has none. We have already seen one case in which truth is prohibited by law. In that case truth is called sedition. In other case, it is called libel, which is also prohibited. Law courts are very funny places, provided you are not the accused. The law pretends that it expects witnesses to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. But lawyers have full licence to try their best to prove that black is white or that white is black, as the case may be, by a process of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. In fact that is their *raison d'être*. A magistrate on the other hand is constitutionally as incapable of lying as the English King of doing wrong and is also constitutionally “learned”. It is said that our Sages of yore could even compel laws of nature to adjust themselves so that even their accidental utterances might come true. Even so, a magistrate says “I convict you”, and suddenly an honest man becomes a criminal, without redress if the magistrate keeps within certain limits.

Religions have the special privilege of being entirely based on lies, as they deal with imaginary quantities, endowed with still more imaginary qualities, which do not lend themselves to verification. Religions are terribly afraid of truth or even any theory opposed to their tenets. The theory of evolution must not be taught because it is opposed to Christianity. A Hindu missionary recently admitted that he considered it permissible to cheat for religious propaganda: merely a matter of ‘policy’.

Sex is perhaps the subject in which lying is most openly advocated and considered absolutely essential for the welfare of humanity. People are aghast with

horror at the very idea of telling the truth to children, whom it is apparently a duty to mislead. Parents and everybody else must lie in order that children may remain "innocent". This supposed duty is carried so far by some protagonists of ignorance that they falsify anatomical illustrations for children's text-books. In one of these, I found the bladder looking exactly like a lemon cut through its poles, with an opening at one of these, and the urethral passage entirely absent. That is apparently obscene, in spite of the famous remark of a Christian preacher to the effect that he was not ashamed to name what God was not ashamed to create.

The most ridiculous definitions of obscenity emanate from apparently sensible people. A legal luminary in France had the honesty to admit that it was impossible to define obscenity, and still quite a number of wiseacres have made fools of themselves by trying their hand at it. The most ludicrous definition was given by an English Judge, Chief Justice Cockburn, and this ancient definition is theoretically accepted in England and India. A look into the history of what is known as Lord Campbell's Act (1857) will expose the utter absurdity of the interpretation. In the parliamentary debate on the Bill, Lord Campbell explained that it was aimed against "works written for the single purpose of corrupting the morals of youth". The measure was thus *intended* to apply only to these. But Cockburn, who succeeded Lord Campbell as Chief Justice, interpreted it eleven years later to include anything having a tendency "to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall." Mr. H. F. Rubenstein remarks: "In one sentence the scope of the Act has been extended

to embrace potentially, not merely the works of some of our most eminent poets, but any book in general circulation, except perhaps *Whitaker's Almanac* and the *Telephone Directory*." I am not sure of the latter being excluded either, because some Hindu surnames I know would certainly be called obscene and they may easily be in the *Telephone Directory*. Lord Chief Justice Cockburn is said to have been one of the greatest lawyers of his time. How then did he commit this absurdity? The *Encyclopedia Britannica* throws some light on it. He died in 1882, a bachelor, aged 78, a man of "small stature, but great dignity of deportment He was fond too, of society and was throughout his life addicted to frivolities not altogether consistent with the positions of dignity which he successively occupied." Naturally, his dignity required that the frivolity of his private life should be compensated by consummate hypocrisy in public and hence this absurd interpretation, a monument of stupidity.

Of course, as I have stated above, this definition is only theoretically accepted. The difficulty of applying it is obvious and a magistrate can therefore declare anything obscene if it is not acceptable to him. And this is what he does in practice. He decides first of all whether he is going to call a thing obscene, then faithfully recites the above definition as a sort of religious formula and convicts or acquits as he chooses, *asserting that he is acting on that definition*.

Another convenient thing in law is what they call 'precedent.' If it happens to agree with the magistrate's view, he quotes it in support, otherwise he coolly ignores it. The Bombay High Court, for instance, in a famous Obscenity case, laid down that obscenity is a matter of

language, since the same thought could be expressed in decent or in filthy language. Nothing is intrinsically obscene; only the way of expressing it can be obscene. In spite of this, I was convicted on two occasions though it was admitted even by the prosecution that my language was not obscene.

The League of Nations has taken a hand in this obscenity business. Now the League of Nations may be expected to be sensible. But the members of that most august body have naturally to pretend to be dignified, in spite of that suspicious incident of a brothel being taken from Paris to Geneva expressly to cater for some conference connected with the League; and can anybody imagine any of these dignified people voting against any measure, however stupid, for the suppression of so called obscenity? Naturally therefore anything of this kind proposed by prudes is passed without opposition. How absurd such a measure can be may be judged from a few instances of the way it works. A definition of obscenity being admittedly out of question, it is left to the discretion of the Customs authorities in every country to prevent the import of "obscene matter." And discretion in this matter is liable to the greatest abuse. Pictures which are not obscene in an Art Exhibition are obscene elsewhere. Bible stories are not obscene in the Bible, but a French judge opined that if anyone took into his head to publish a selection of them separately, they would certainly be considered obscene. Still the Bible is distributed free and even children may read it. The fact is that nothing is intrinsically obscene and it is only obscene minds that find obscenity in certain things because their point of view is obscene. That is why

magistrates and Collectors of Customs give differing judgments about the same writings. An Assistant Collector of Customs once informed me that some "obscene matter" had arrived by the Foreign Post for me and asked me to show cause why it should not be confiscated and I should not be penalized for it. As I had not ordered any "obscene matter" and had not the faintest idea what it could be, I replied to that effect and added that he was welcome to confiscate it if he liked to, but that it would not be justice to penalize me. In the meanwhile, another Assistant Collector of Customs took his place and wrote to me that in his opinion the "matter" was not "obscene" and forwarded it to me. They turned out to be books by reputed authors. Obscenity is therefore a personal quality, which people transfer (or pretend to transfer) to things according to circumstances. And this is why no definition of obscenity can be given, and this is why laws against obscenity result in a display of idiosyncrasies of magistrates and Collectors of Customs. And so all modern writers claim that laws against obscenity should be abolished.

In a world ruled by hypocrisy, brute force and money, it is extremely dangerous to tell the truth, whether you are dealing with political, social, religious or sex matters. People prefer their prejudices and will defend them tooth and nail and unless you are prepared to take the consequences, it is better to leave truth alone, or at least to keep it to yourself instead of trying to spread it. Will the truth ever cease to be dangerous? It is difficult to say. At present it certainly is.

R. D. KARVE.

PRAYER, FAITH, TRUST, and THEN WHAT ?

In reply to the statement that one has prayed to God and trusted him, but that God did not answer one's prayers, a preacher will say that you prayed amiss or that you did not have faith.

Christ prayed : "Father, keep them in thy name...that they may be one, even as we are... Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us; **that the world may believe that thou didst send me.**" John 17:11, 20, 21.

No wonder the majority of the people in the world do not believe that God sent Christ, for after the passing of over 1900 years Christ's prayer has not yet been answered. Christians quarrel over baptism, prohibition, sabbath-keeping, the difference between spirit, soul and mind, immortality of the soul, transubstantiation, hell, heaven, purgatory, second coming of Christ, who or what is God, or the devil. Christians cannot agree as to the correct translation of many words in the Greek and the Hebrew text of the Bible, such as sheol, pneuma, psuche, nephesh, etc. As the originals of none of the books of the Bible are in existence, Christians cannot agree as to which copies are correct; they cannot agree as to what books in the Bible are genuine and which are apocryphal; and they cannot agree on thousands of other subjects.

Why hasn't God answered Christ's prayer? Didn't Christ have the faith of a grain of mustard seed, and for that reason has his prayer not been answered? Possibly Christ prayed amiss! If God

would answer Christ's prayer, there could not be "many minds, many opinions," but many minds with but one universal system of religious FACTS. Irrespective of race, colour or creed, the intelligent people of the world agree in regard to the principles of arithmetic, algebra and geometry. All religions agree at least in one thing—to take up a collection or ask for contributions for their respective deities.

All intelligent people, irrespective of their various religious beliefs, resort to the same methods of putting out a serious fire by using water, not prayers. Christ said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ... nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matt. 17:20. Yet persons caught in a fire of a burning religious hospital, or home, or hotel or church, will offer an agonizing prayer to their supreme deity, but that ever-present deity will allow them to be roasted and burnt like a despised rat in a trap or a vicious lion. What good were their prayers? They met the same fate as a helpless Atheist or pagan.

In 2 Kings 2:23, 24, we read that when some young lads mocked Elisha, saying, "Go up, thou baldhead; go up, thou baldhead," Elisha's trust in God caused God to send "forth two she-bears out of the woods and tear forty and two children of them." But the prayers of all the preachers in the world could not induce their deities to prevent the World War, or any other war. The God in whom they trusted allowed the Christian nations to make manure out of their best physical manhood, which is considerably worse than cannibals

honoring God-trusting Christian missionaries by using them as food.

What does one receive by trusting God that the pagan or Atheist does not receive? The Chinese receive a flood or drought in China; so does the trusting Christian in the United States and other places in the world.

Very often we are told we must look to God for "spiritual" gifts, not for material. If God can give spiritual gifts, cannot he also give material gifts, especially as Christ said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.....If ye shall ask **anything** in my name, that will do." John 14: 12-14.

"Whatsoever" and "anything" include material things as well as spiritual things. Proof. We are told Christ turned water into wine; that he multiplied the loaves and the fishes; he healed the sick and raised the dead.

When persons desire spiritual things, such as wisdom or knowledge, they generally go to school, or read books on subjects, or listen to lectures. Solomon asked God for wisdom, and God allowed Solomon to choose seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. 1 Kings 11: 3. Most of these women were undoubtedly intelligent, and from the information obtained from them, Solomon possibly could have written the Book of Proverbs. But why didn't God prevent Solomon from disgracing himself? God compelled Jonah, as well as Balaam and his ass, to obey him.

If there is any efficacy in prayer, why does a God-trusting Pope surround himself with walls and bodyguards having

rifles, etc.? Is he afraid a bullet may go through an omnipresent God and strike the Pope, injuring or killing him? If the Pope really trusted God to answer his prayers and protect him, why does he depend upon human aid the same as a Buddhist, Mohammedan, Atheist, or Pagan? Why doesn't he do as Elisha did? "Elisha prayed unto Jehovah, and said, Smite this people with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha." 2 Kings 6: 18.

It has been suggested that these elegantly uniformed guards are only ornaments. Can anyone imagine the poor lowly Jesus surrounding himself with such expensive decorations, especially when there is so much poverty in the world? Christ rode to Jerusalem on a borrowed (some claim stolen) ass, but many of our ministers ride in expensive automobiles.

What is said about the Pope applies also to presidents, kings, premiers, and many wealthy persons in the world. Why are many of them surrounded by secret service men with the latest improved weapons? Why do God-trusting nations build submarines, cannons, airplanes? Why do they manufacture poison gas? Why do Christians lock the doors of their homes and churches just as a pagan does? They do not trust God to protect their homes from burglars or wild animals.

When Christians get sick or injured, they hurry for human aid, whether it is a preacher, or a doctor, or a Christian Science practitioner. They all want to stay on this wicked earth and help an omnipotent God to reform it. God's invitation to come to heaven

is not accepted. Why do Christian Science practitioners go to dentists? Why doesn't God keep their teeth sound? If teeth decay, why do not all Christians ask God to repair their teeth? "NO-THING shall be impossible unto you."

We hear it said, "Trust in God and keep your powder dry"; "God helps them who help themselves." What is the use of trusting him? The heathens, pagans, gentiles, Mohammedans, Buddhists, etc., do the same thing; they trust in their deities and keep their war weapons in good condition. What's the difference? Atheists and Agnostics admit that the only help that they, or anyone else, receive is through their own efforts and the assistance of others, irrespective of a belief in any deity.

Christ said, "O ye of little faith! Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Matt, 6; 30, 31.

Why does a person who trusts God save money; why speculate in stocks to get more money; why invest in real estate? Why insure one's life, or certain parts of one's body, against disease or accident? Why not sing to one's relatives that familiar song, "God Will Take Care of You"? Why not show one's trust in God by doing these things differently from the methods used by non-believers in Christ? Why take out earthquake or fire insurance on a house or church? When the walls of Jericho fell God protected a harlot and her relatives. Josh 6:25. Has God lost his power, or doesn't he exist? When the big fire was in San Francisco, many of the saloons were saved, but many of the churches and homes were destroyed.

Why? If God didn't have anything to do with it, why trust him, if he exists?

Almost all religions claim that their deity answers prayer. Therefore, it seems that most answered prayers are like praying: "O piece of Wood (Baal, God, Buddha, Jupiter, Mohammed, Saints, etc.), let the sun, tomorrow, rise in the east and set in the west." And thereafter go around bragging that THE Wood answered the prayer. Let us have another prayer contest (1 Kg. 18:20-39) between the different religions and denominations, and from the results discover the true religion.

In the Bible we find many instances where God did not protect those who trusted him. Cain killed Abel; David had Uriah killed; Jezebel had Naboth killed; Zachariah was killed. Little innocent children were slaughtered about the time Christ was supposed to have been born. John the Baptist was beheaded. Stephen was stoned to death. James, Peter and Paul were killed. No one knows how many thousands, some claim millions, of persons were tortured and killed during the reign of the Holy Inquisitions. Persons that are willing to lay down their lives for a principle are the very persons that should be preserved to populate the earth, not the cowardst hat submit to the persecutions of a religious sect. Those who were killed, and those who did the killing, were undoubtedly, sincere. Christ said, "When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." John 16:13. Why didn't God in response to the pain-wrung cries and prayers of women, men and children from thousands of blazing piles of fagots, send the promised Holy Spirit, and guide into the truth all persons connected with these persecutions, making them one, for the reason given

by Christ—"that the world may believe that thou didst send me"?

It has been said that God willed it. What would we think of a human father who allowed his son to be murdered, when the father could easily have prevented it? If a human being saw an innocent child being tortured and killed, not by Herod, but by gangsters, and the person did not try to prevent the slaughter, we would have the utmost contempt for the coward. If a father deliberately allowed his child to be tortured and crucified and did not try to prevent it, we would say he was an accessory to the crime, or else that the father was insane. Why didn't the Father kill the gangster-devil who was torturing his child—handle him as we would handle a brutal murderer?

If Christ knew everything, why did he ask in prayer a question to which he knew the answer? "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" My mind (nephesh) is shocked, sickened at the thought of a righteous judge punishing an innocent person instead of the guilty one, when the judge could easily kill the master criminal—the devil—or at least put him in jail. No sane, self-respecting man would allow an innocent person, voluntarily, to die for him. When a person sacrifices his life or health in order to discover the cause or cure of a disease, the question of the guilt or innocence of a person is not involved.

Some one says Christ had to die for the sins of the world. Bah! You might as well say that an innocent child must die for other children. Why? Because we or God have not found a way yet to destroy the unnatural conditions that make gangsters. We at least try to get

gangsters; but if God exists he CAN get the devil and does not do it. If there is a God he knows that he cannot reform the devil. (Omnipotent God!) Why, then, hasn't an all-powerful God killed the devil long ago, or at least put him in jail somewhere, instead of waiting thousands of years, allowing millions of people in the meantime to suffer on this earth and then to roast after death? If God doesn't will the evil in the world, the devil must be stronger than God.

If there is an omnipotent God occupying in any manner, shape, or condition, all space, (Psa. 139:7-10), where is there room for a devil? Isa. 45:7.

It has been said that we trust in God when we use the brains he has given us. Tell me, then, wherein the Christians' trust in God differs from the trust of ancient Greeks who developed geometry; or the Chinese, trusting in their idols, who invented paper, silk, perfected chinaware, printing gunpowder, compass, etc. Or wherein does the trust in God differ from the pagans who invested the alphabet that we now use; or the Arabians who invented the numerals now in use in arithmetic; or the pagans who invented algebra? All intelligent people trust in their knowledge of the laws of nature.

Someone says, "Now you are caught; who made nature?" I don't know. But I believe that the same elements and forces that made your God (if he exists) made everything else in the universe. I am a doubter like Thomas, one of Christ's disciples. John 20:25.

FRED W. LOCH.

(2225 Market St., Oakland,
Calif., United States.)

A PRACTICAL PROGRAMME

[By EDITH HOW-MARTIN, M. Sc., Director, Birth Control International Centre, London]

The Editor of *Marriage Hygiene* calls upon the supporters of this new venture to fight "against prejudice, evasion and meaningless taboos." This call is timely for, unless believers in the value of freedom as applied to all aspects of life bestir themselves, they will be overwhelmed by the prejudices and new meaningless taboos that are being enforced by modern dictators, notably as regards marriage in Roman Catholic countries.

If this new journal of *Marriage Hygiene* can help to bring the light of scientific knowledge to bear upon and to overcome even some of the prejudices and social and religious taboos with which marriage is surrounded, it will make a notable contribution to human happiness.

There can be no healthy and happy marriage without healthy and happy men and women. To ensure the conditions for healthy human beings involves an immense social and political programme, and it is obvious that the proposals supported by this journal must be limited in scope in order to have a practical programme.

First in importance comes the age of marriage. This should be legally not less than 16 for girls and 18 for boys, with public opinion favouring not less than 20 for both sexes.

Next in importance comes sex education. This must begin in infancy in the homes, must be continued in the schools, and sex and marriage education centres

must be made available for adults where information and advice can be freely obtained.

In marriage itself, eugenic considerations should take precedence over all others. Personal preferences should be the deciding factor. Arranged marriages should disappear, and especially should the cruel custom of buying, selling and inheriting wives be abolished. All marriage customs should be equal as between the sexes. The important question of miscegenation should be studied. At present mixed marriages are denounced or advocated mainly on emotional grounds. Social customs inimical to such marriages are enforced by a public opinion based on prejudices and with small consideration for the future welfare and happiness of the offspring.

Parents or the partners themselves should demand a clean bill of health and have a clear understanding about the desirable number of children who may be born.

A healthy and satisfactory marriage must include a knowledge of birth control methods. Then sterilisation, and in some cases abortion, must be freely available to married people. Mistakes in marriage must be capable of rectification, which means cheap and easy divorce, Health Centres where parents can obtain information on their own health, prenatal care and advice, care of infants and children and guidance in psychological problems and difficulties of married life.

Good beginnings in all these directions have been made in many countries. The valuable experiences gained need to be made available to serious workers everywhere and this journal can act as a medium for exchange of ideas.

Outside the limits of normal marriage are many serious problems which impinge on marriage and challenge not only accepted ideas but also our self-complacency. These too should be faced. What have sincere thinkers and workers

to say about companionate marriage, free experimentation in premarital sexual experiences, prostitution, homosexuality, the care and prospects of so-called "illegitimate" children?

The only sure basis of all work on marriage problems is accurate knowledge, based on careful observations and, whenever possible, subjected to the tests of experiment and experience.

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RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION IS BUTT OF SILLY ATTACKS

Malicious Effusions Published Without Sense of Responsibility

(By Dr. C. L. D'Avoine)

After the unsuccessful prosecution the Bombay Police launched against me as the Editor of "Reason," the Journal of Rationalist Association of India, under Section 29 S. A. I.P.C., in January last, the public must have been quite surprised to read in "The Times of India" of recent dates repeated serious allegations by two correspondents of that paper, that the Journal "Reason" continues to make malicious effusions and insulting attacks against the founders of religions, particularly against the Prophet Mahomet and the founder of Christianity.

It was also stated that in the last issue of "Reason" (October-November issue) on the first two pages, a malicious attack is made on the Prophet Mahomet, the English Royal Family and the Bishop of London. These two correspondents allege that the Rationalist Association of India is a pernicious body, which must be in league with Moscow and one of them, who signs himself "Curious," expressed his surprise that the authorities do not surpress it.

Baseless Allegations

On the appearance of the first letter under the signature of "Curious" in "The Times of India," on or about the 30th of October last, the Hon'y: Secretary of the Association wrote a letter to the Editor of "The Times of India" (which was published) pointing out that these allegations were malicious and baseless and that the Association was not in any way connected with Moscow or any political body outside or in India.

In spite of this, another letter appeared in that paper, this time under the signature of one Arthur Young, making more serious allegations against the Association and its Journal. This was followed, after a brief interval, by another letter from the same Arthur Young, making still further allegations and reiterating his belief that the Association must be in league with Moscow. On the same day, in the same issue of the paper, a second letter from "Curious" appeared endorsing all that Young had said.

Considering that a copy of "Reason" is sent every month to "The Times of India," one expected the Editor of that paper to make sure whether there was any foundation in these allegations before publishing these letters. "The Times of India" did nothing of the kind. Had it done so, it would have found that neither in the number of "Reason" in question, nor in any previous numbers since the Journal has appeared had there been any attack or effusion on Prophet Mahomet, Jesus Christ, Moses, or any other founder of religion !

Cowardly Insinuations.

That these allegations and cowardly insinuations were quite baseless and are obviously the work of individuals, who have a grudge against the Rationalist Association of India or the Editor of its Journal, is quite clear as will be seen presently. They have taken advantage of the confidence of "The Times of India," in them to use its columns for such calumny in order to vent their spleen

against me, and "The Times of India" never thought it prudent to verify their malicious allegations.

Now, who are these two correspondents of "The Times of India" who make these allegations against an Association like R. A. I.? Arthur Young, I understand, is a European, about whom little or nothing is known in Bombay, except that he is trying to exploit the fears of the Indian Princes on the coming New Constitution in India and their abhorrence of Bolshevism. Young, it would appear, is going to protect them against these menaces, and he has boasted everywhere that the Princes and other high officials in India are giving him the greatest encouragement and support.

Refused Finance

"Curious," who is no other than our old friend, J. D. Jenkins of Poona, has joined him in this scheme, and both wanted me and one of my sons to join them to exploit the "gold mine," as they call this project of theirs. We were to begin by first financing them, which I flatly refused to do. J. D. Jenkins, of course, is wellknown character. He is the man who has an itch to write on every subject under the sun. He has even contributed rationalistic articles frequently to my Journal, and yet, when it suits him, proclaims himself to be very anti-rationalistic! One who is ever ready to poke his nose in every discussion going, scientific, political, literary and what not, though he is in reality an ignoramus and does not appear to know it. One who runs down the Indians in Anglo-Indian papers and professes to be interested in their welfare in Indian papers. One who runs down the Congress in Anglo-Indian papers; one who professes to admire Mahatma

Gandhi in Nationalist Papers and slashes him in Anglo-Indian papers and in this fashion he is both for or against this or that as it suits his purpose.

Just now he is very anti-Communist and is a great admirer of Imperialism, doubtless to impress the Native Princes and the powers-that-be. The zeal to write any nonsense he can against the Soviet has greatly increased of late, since he made the discovery that "The Times of India" is ridiculously prejudiced against Russia. He is sure that any nonsense he writes against that country will be readily published in that paper. This, of course, is part of his plan to mystify the Native Princes if he gets the chance to approach them.

Asked For Loan

My first acquaintance with Arthur Young was through Jenkins. As recently as the 29th of last month. I received a letter from Jenkins, who informed me that he had a Captain Young staying with him at Poona, who, he says, "Is a great admirer of your efforts in "Reason" and elsewhere." (The same Young who a few days after this has such a lot to say against "Reason!")

Jenkins wanted me to see him in Bombay on a certain date for an important business (in which there was a gold mine in prospect). It turned out that Young whom I saw as desired, wanted me to join him and Jenkins to conduct a weekly journal on behalf of the Indian Princes. As this Arthur Young straight away asked me to loan the sum of Rs. 1,000 to start this business, I promptly refused. From that moment I appear to have made an enemy of him and of Jenkins. When I informed Jenkins about it, he, in a letter dated 2nd November 1934 affected great surprise

that Young should have asked me for such a sum.

"I am more than surprised," wrote Jenkins, "that Young 'touched' you for Rs. 1000. I am writing to tell him to go to hell. He is rather fishy.

I complained to Jenkins that his letter to "The Times of India" under the signature of "Curious" might do harm to the Rationalist Association of India and in the same letter, in which he writes about Young, he simply says that "I do not think the Association will be harmed in any way by what appears in "The Times of India." Your Association is getting excellent publicity.

Motive For Attack

A few days after this, Jenkins in a post card, informed me that "Young is replying to your 'Reason' articles in 'The Times of India,' but I don't think it will appear."

I think this is enough to show the motive that prompted these two men to attack me and the annoyance they knew it would cause me and the Association.

The public can now form their own opinion on the part "The Times of India" has played in this sorry business, and yet it does not think that in all decency, it owes an apology to me and the Association. "*The Sentinel*."
